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Frontier Freemasons: Masonic Networks Linking The Great Lakes To The Atlantic World, 1750-1820

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**FRONTIER FREEMASONS: MASONIC NETWORKS
LINKING THE GREAT LAKES TO THE ATLANTIC WORLD, 1750-1820**

by

KEVIN H. NICHOLS

DISSERTATION

Submitted to the Graduate School

of Wayne State University,

Detroit, Michigan

in partial fulfillment of the requirements

for the degree of

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2020

MAJOR: HISTORY

Approved By:

Advisor

Date

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DEDICATION

I would like to thank Marguerite Leonard for more things than this simple paragraph can communicate. She was there through the years when I could not be and kept the home-fires burning without burning down the house. I never had to worry about things back home when I was away overseas, which is more comforting than many realize and likely something only those who have been there truly appreciate. I always knew that she had my back, and everything back home was in good hands. Moreover, Marguerite provided valuable feedback, comments, suggestions, and editing that helped make this dissertation better than it would be if left to my own devices. She did all of these things while juggling her own career and many obligations. Marguerite has my deepest thanks and respect. This Dissertation is dedicated to her.

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The best records in the world are not much help without the training and guidance to examine, interpret, and write about them in a meaningful way. To that end, I would like to thank my mentor and advisor, Dr. Eric Ash. Dr. Ash's expertise was invaluable in helping me formulate research questions, keeping my project on track against a tight timeline and guiding me through what can only be described as an unusual time at Wayne State. By that, I mean Dr. Ash worked with me through numerous overseas deployments and writing a dissertation during a pandemic. Never will one find a more dedicated, thoughtful and supportive mentor, for which I am grateful.

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Introduction: The Atlantic World, Great Lakes and Freemasonry

The Atlantic World was a European invention, not because Europeans were its only occupants, but because advances in European ship technology allowed the Europeans to be the first to connect its four sides into a single entity. While Europeans were the first to do this, all non-European peoples shared in this development. This is different from other bodies of water such as the Indian Ocean which had been fully integrated prior to the arrival of the Portuguese and is the object of studies such as: *Crossing the Bay of Bengal* by Sunil S. Amrith.¹ In the fifteenth-and sixteenth-centuries Europeans started to build ships that could make regular Atlantic crossings as well as have the logistical capabilities to support permanent overseas colonization and imperial aspirations. It is worth noting that, early on, Viking groups established settlements in parts of Newfoundland but ultimately had to abandon them due to conflicts with native peoples as well as distance from the homeland. The long-ship simply could not perform that kind of logistics operation. At its core, the study of Atlantic History is connected to the study of European maritime history and the movement of goods, people, and cultures through an emerging state-level economic system.

As scholars began to look at the Atlantic Ocean as a system for analysis, questions about the migration of people, networks, cultural and material goods, trade and exchange could be looked at in new ways. By shifting the framework from a given landmass to the oceans, studies focused on networks, exchanges, colonialism and patterns that led to the development of the modern world. Historians looked at networks on a world scale. For example, Sven Beckett in his innovative study, *Empire of Cotton, A Global History*, examines the role of a commodity and

¹ Sunil S. Amrith. *Crossing the Bay of Bengal, The Furies of Nature and the Fortunes of Migrants*. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2013).

how it shaped empires, economic systems, networks of exchange and slavery.² Atlantic and World history often focused on networks and the interconnectedness of regions. Sunil Amrith's, *Crossing the Bay of Bengal, The Furies of Nature and the Fortunes of Migrants* examined the Bay of Bengal as both a highway and barrier for traders, workers, migrants, and slaves and how this highway changed due to political developments, statehood and boundaries that disrupt centuries old ways of life.

Atlantic and global perspectives allowed for new modes of inquiry; however, some scholars are still "straight jacked by the primary organizing unit of the modern political world, the nation-state."³ Ideas of citizenship and nation states were still new in the eighteenth-century and were often shifting in the Great Lakes region. This study examines the eighteenth and early nineteenth-century's Great Lakes region and its connection to the Atlantic world. The region was one of shifting political boundaries, where national identities were just beginning to form. In this environment, supranational organizations like the Freemasons developed a network of connections that crossed national, religious and ethnic boundaries. Many masons were traders, government officials, and military officers. These men were brothers in a fraternity that reached from frontier trading posts in Mackinaw back to London and the rest of the world. Scholars of the Atlantic world generally ignore the Great Lakes region and do not consider its role in the eighteenth-century Atlantic world. This is somewhat ironic given that the Seven Year's War, arguably the most important of the eighteenth-century wars for empire, began in the Ohio Valley and not in Europe, the Caribbean, or India.

² Sven Beckert. *Empire of Cotton, A Global History*. (New York: Vintage Books, 2015).

³ Jessica Harland-Jacobs, "Hands across the Sea": The Masonic Network, British Imperialism, and the North Atlantic World," *Geographical Review* 89 (1999):238.

Past scholarship has tended to examine the Great Lakes as an almost closed system, akin to a regional study, but that is changing. Historians are starting to look at the Great Lakes from an Atlantic perspective but focusing on key port cities such as Detroit and Chicago. Theodore J. Karamanski in *Schooner Passage* looked at schooners on Lake Michigan with a focus that examined the Chicago waterfront but not broader Atlantic trade.⁴ Another study by Catherine Cangany, *Frontier Seaport*, examined the development of Detroit and its early settlers and how they were active participants in both the frontier and economies of empire.⁵

This study will demonstrate that the Great Lakes region was a vital part of the Atlantic World and that the Freemasons were integral in creating an ever-growing network of military and commercial links that made this region of the New World feasible and profitable. This study will be broken down into four chapters that will start with the spread of Freemasonry throughout the frontier and then work its way off the Great Lakes to the Atlantic World. Chapter One, will discuss the creation of the fraternity, its philosophy, history, spread and composition of its members. This chapter will also include a discussion of why there was so much appeal to Freemasonry, when many other groups lasted for only a short time. The second chapter will look at the military and travelling lodges and the spread of freemasonry on the frontier. This will also include Native American Freemasons, the spread of masonic culture and how it served to provide a bond for various peoples, classes, professions and tribes. The third chapter will discuss the establishment of trading posts, and trade networks, masons'

⁴ Theodore J. Karamanski. *Schooner Passage, Sailing Ships and the Lake Michigan Frontier*. (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2000).

⁵ Catherine Cangany. *Frontier Seaport, Detroit's Transformation into an Atlantic Entrepôt*. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2014).

preferences to work and trade with other members of the fraternity. Several case studies will provide examples of how the network functioned. This chapter will link frontier trading posts, towns, and forts to the cities on the East Coast. The fourth chapter examines masonic connections and networks in the broader Atlantic world: How masons connected, what their motivations were and how they assisted each other. This chapter will look at lodges outside the Great Lakes region, such as in the Caribbean, and how and why masons in the Caribbean islands connected to masons in the Great Lakes region.

Masonic primary source material forms the foundation of this study. The masons keep meticulous meeting minutes and records, often mentioning the reasons for a Brother's absence from meetings as well as their business and political offices and connections. Masons who missed meetings were often noted and their reasons for being away were recorded. For example, Brother Robert Abbott was elected to office within the lodge in 1802, but, "his business calling him to the Indian Country and consequently not present to be installed."⁶ Having names, dates and locations in lodge minutes allows us to begin to connect the dots of a broader network. Each state as well as Canada and the province of Quebec has a bound compilation of primary source records. These records discuss meeting minutes, officers' activities, as well as political and economic information.

The Freemasons today are the world's oldest and largest fraternity, whose history goes back centuries. The oldest known masonic document, the Regius Poem, has been dated to the fourteenth-century, but Freemasonry as it is known today emerged in the early modern era.

⁶ Conover, Jefferson S. *Freemasonry in Michigan, A Comprehensive History of Michigan Masonry From Its Earliest Introduction in 1764, Compiled*. (Coldwater, Michigan: The Conover Engraving and Printing Company, 1897). 24

During the seventeenth-century, the operative stone mason guilds, the craft guilds that actually engaged in stonework, began to admit non-stone workers, who called themselves speculative masons. By the eighteenth-century, the days of building stone castles and cathedrals were over, and the speculative masons all but displaced the operative masons. In 1717, the first Grand Lodge of speculative (or accepted) Masons was formed in England. From England, Masonry quickly spread to other countries throughout Europe and the world.

Masonry arrived in the colonies with some of the earliest settlers and quickly became popular throughout the settlements. Daniel Coxe, Esq. received a deputation from England on June 5th 1730 to become the Provincial Grand Master for New York, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania, with power given for those provinces to elect their own Grand Masters. The Grand Lodge of Pennsylvania has chartered many lodges in the colonies and lodges as far away as the West Indies. It is these types of connections and the generally good record keeping by the Freemasons that provided the records to look at masonic connections in the Great Lakes Region as being part of the broader Atlantic World.

Masonry, because of its popularity and ability to attract and retain members, was unusual in being socially, religiously, and politically flexible. There were many societies and clubs in the eighteenth-century, but almost all quickly died out. Although the Masonic fraternity clearly was linked to religion, it allowed broad interpretations that prevented it from becoming sectarian. Initiation rituals provided both an emotionally powerful and rational experience, allowing Christian tradition to blend with deism and ancient esoteric ideas. Masonry, by creating ideas of acceptance and brotherhood, formed a powerful stabilizing

aspect of English society in the eighteenth-century. These ideas were exported throughout the British Empire.

The Freemasons are perhaps the only non-state-supported and non-ecclesiastical organization that had a worldwide network of brothers. These members, through signs and modes of recognition, could quickly establish an extended family and trusted relationships virtually anywhere they traveled. It is the records of these travels and connections that are crucial for this study. The network of connections established by Masonic ties served to help link the Great Lakes to the broader Atlantic World. These connections were useful for transmitting cultures, ideas, and material goods. Masonic brothers served in virtually all walks of life and in many important capacities in government, including military postings. This wealth of occupational specialties, government and military connections make the Freemasons a unique organization for exploring Great Lakes and Atlantic World connections.

The unique geography, waterways, and international boundaries of the Great Lakes put an international stamp on Freemasonry in the region from its introduction into the frontier. Regarding the Michigan territory, Detroit was founded in 1701 by Antoine de la Mothe Cadillac. In 1760, with English troops having captured Canada, Major Rogers took possession of Detroit. A large portion of the troops that took possession of Detroit were several companies of the 60th Regiment, also known as the Royal American Regiment. Many of the officers were from New York and other eastern colonies. Some of the officers in the 60th Regiment were masons, and they “with others residing there became desirous of meeting together as such, and cultivating

the social relations of the order."⁷ They petitioned Provincial Grand Master George Harrison of New York for a warrant to open a lodge of Master Masons in Detroit. It was granted on April 27th 1764. Thus Freemasonry arrived extremely early in what would become the Michigan territory. It is interesting to note that this charter was granted by the Right Worshipful John Proby, Baron of Carysford, in the county of Wicklow, in the Kingdom of Ireland. John Proby was also Provincial Grand Master of New York.

Charters to form lodges were changed with some regularity, further illustrating the supranational nature of the fraternity. In 1794, Michigan was claimed by England as part of Upper Canada. It was natural that the Masons in Detroit would want a charter from their own country, so they applied for a new charter from the Grand Lodge of Canada. This charter was sent on September 7th, 1794. This new charter was issued by the Grand Lodge of Quebec by the authority of the Grand Lodge of England. Later, the Michigan territory was formed with a charter issued from New York. As the area that would become Michigan changed hands, charters were granted from various Grand Lodges to continue Masonic work. Freemasonry in Detroit, from its earliest days, was linked to military lodges moving throughout the frontier, Canada and Quebec, by way of Ireland, and through Canada and New York, by way of England. These connections with New York also linked lodges in Michigan with lodges in Massachusetts and Pennsylvania.

With regards to studying the history of the fraternity, in the past masonry was all too often written about and viewed from a masonic context with little attention paid to its impact

⁷ Jefferson S. Conover. *Freemasonry in Michigan, A Comprehensive History of Michigan Masonry from its Earliest Introduction in 1764, Compiled*. (Coldwater, Michigan: The Conover Engraving and Printing Company, 1897.) 14.

on Enlightenment society. Masonic scholarship tended to focus on the fraternity's rituals. Masonic scholars and members themselves explored this; Albert Pike, for example wrote *Morals and Dogma*⁸, and H.L. Haywood, wrote *Symbolical Masonry*.⁹ These writers offered detailed explanations pertaining to the doctrine, symbols and initiation rituals of the fraternity. These initiation rites served to unite members, provide ways of identifying each other, and instill other ideological and cultural beliefs to its members. However, little was discussed outside of internal masonic lodge activities and organization.

Sociologists such as Abner Cohen and Georg Simmel studied the concept of a Masonic community. They argue that the degrees and rituals help to create a form of cohesion and solidarity within Freemasonry. These degrees also stress that the rituals revolve around universal moral doctrines and help to explain man's place in nature and within society.¹⁰ These ideas became more relevant as masonry expanded with the British Empire. These ideas of natural religion and universal morals manifested themselves in things like the Cult of the Supreme Being, established in France during the French Revolution by Maximilien Robespierre, who was a mason. It was intended to become the state religion of the new French Republic. Many early writers on Freemasonry were either members of the fraternity or people whose purpose was to attack the organization. Writers such as Augustin Barruel and Martin Gaston both argue that the rites of masonry were associated with and encouraged revolutionary

⁸ Albert Pike. *Morals and Dogma of the Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite of Freemasonry*. (Radford, Virginia: SMK Books, 2011).

⁹ H. L. Haywood. *Symbolical Masonry, An Interpretation of the Three Degrees*. (New York: ZuuBooks, 2011).

¹⁰ Ibid., 3-4.

activities.¹¹ Many of these writers have an axe to grind with masonry, such as Barruel, who was a Jesuit and forced to flee France during the Revolution. He viewed secret societies as the cause of the French monarchy's downfall.

Recently, the academic community has taken an interest in Freemasonry and other fraternal organizations. *The Journal for Research into Freemasonry and Fraternalism* is an interdisciplinary academic journal which is published twice a year. This journal has grown out of an increased scholarly interest in Freemasonry. This has become possible as masonic archives and libraries are making their material available to a broader research community, beyond academically oriented Freemasons and the ever-present conspiracy theorists. The fraternity is of interest to scholars of Colonial America, British Imperialism, the Atlantic World and the Enlightenment, just to name a few areas of research. Freemasonry, in spite of the fact that it is one of the socio-political organizations that has had a large impact on the British Empire, Enlightenment and the American colonies remains understudied and has often been excluded from cultural, economic and intellectual histories until the last few decades. The increase in scholarly interest in masonry is demonstrated by the fact that out of 12 doctoral theses devoted entirely to masonic analysis in the British Isles, eight have been written since 2006. In addition, there are now international conferences devoted to the study of Freemasonry. Lastly, in the year 2000, the University of Sheffield established an academic research center for the study of Freemasonry.¹²

¹¹ William R. Weisberger. *Speculative Freemasonry and the Enlightenment. A Study of the Craft in London, Paris, Prague, and Vienna*. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993), 3.

¹² Róbert Péter, Ed., *British Freemasonry, 1717-1813. Volume 1: Institutions*. (London: Routledge, 2016), xiii.

Most of the academic research on masonry has examined the fraternity's role in the Enlightenment. Books such as, *Speculative Freemasonry and the Enlightenment*¹³, examine the Masons in London, Paris, Prague and Vienna. *Revolutionary Brotherhood: Freemasonry and the Transformation of the American Social Order 1730-1840*, by Steven Bullock¹⁴, looks at Freemasonry through its foundation in America. Bullock links masonry with changing ideas of early American society from the colonial era to the rise of Jacksonian democracy. After the Revolution, he looks at masonry's role in shaping the new nation's values and ideas of liberty and republicanism. Many of these books tend to focus on metropolitan, political, and intellectual history.

Along the frontier, masonic Lodges moved with their respective military units. As the frontier expanded, lodges did so as well. This is well documented in Robert Gould's *Military Lodges, The Apron and the Sword*.¹⁵ Gould's book, first published in 1899, demonstrates how British Army units in the colonies had lodges that moved with them. On the frontier, these military lodges admitted colonists as well. When the units were re-deployed, they took their lodges with them. Citizens were then left without a charter and would contact their Grand Lodge for a charter and dispensation to stand up a lodge of their own. Masonry spread much the same way with lodges being chartered on naval vessels, which travelled throughout the world.

¹³ William R. Weisberger. *Speculative Freemasonry and the Enlightenment, A Study of the Craft in London, Paris, Prague, and Vienna*. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993).

¹⁴ Steven C Bullock. *Revolutionary Brotherhood, Freemasonry and the Transformation of the American Social Order, 1730-1840*. (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1996).

¹⁵ Robert Freke Gould. *Military Lodges, The Apron and the Sword*. (Cornerstone Book Publishers, New Orleans, Louisiana, 2014).

Recent scholarship has looked at the relationship between Freemasonry and British imperialism. Jessica L. Harland-Jacobs, in her book *Builders of Empire, Freemasonry and British Imperialism, 1717-1927*¹⁶, argues that masonry was central to the building and cohesion of the British Empire. She looks at several continents and explores topics including globalization, national identities, imperial power and masculinity, to name a few. She does not examine masonry on the American frontier in depth, preferring to look at the organization's cosmopolitan activities. While she looks at several countries and continents, she leaves the Great Lakes region out of her discussion, preferring to stick to cities on the American Eastern Seaboard.

Freemasons excelled at creating a culture and network of brothers, those relationships also extended to native populations. Joy Porter's article "Native American Indian Freemasonry and Its Relation to the Performative Turn within Contemporary American Scholarship"¹⁷ examines the history of Native American Freemasons from the Revolutionary era to the present. The use of ritual as a way of binding peoples together and building trust was certainly useful in establishing trade networks. According to the article, the Iroquois in the Great Lakes region were particularly interested in Masonry.

Frank J. Karpel's article "Mystic Ties of Brotherhood: Freemasonry, Ritual, and Hawaiian Royalty in the Nineteenth Century"¹⁸ examines Masonry's role in reaching across cultural

¹⁶ Jessica L. Harland-Jacobs. *Builders of Empire, Freemasonry and British Imperialism 1717-1927*. (Chapel Hill, University of North Carolina Press, 2007).

¹⁷ Porter, Joy. "Native American Indian Freemasonry and Its Relation to the Performative Turn within Contemporary American Scholarship." *Journal of American Studies* Vol. 47 (2013); 439-458.

¹⁸ Karpel, Frank J. "Mystic Ties of Brotherhood: Freemasonry, Ritual, and Hawaiian Royalty in the Nineteenth Century." *Pacific Historical Review*, Vol. 69 (2000); 357-397.

boundaries, both absorbing new influences and spreading Western ideas. Between the 1840's and 1890's, three of Hawaii's five kings joined the society, and a fourth had requested membership prior to his death. Clearly the fraternity had the ability to reach across national and cultural boundaries, which would prove useful for many political, economic and cultural purposes.

With the focus of this dissertation on utilizing masonic connections to study the Great Lakes as the westernmost frontier of the Atlantic World, the various lodge records served as a jumping off point. Lodge meeting minutes established membership rolls. The names on the rolls were useful in looking at family and business records in order to connect the names of masons in the Great Lakes region to names of masons on the East Coast, and from there to points throughout the British Empire.

Records exist for ships' logs that were under the command of or owned by Masons. Examining ships logs, cargo manifests and routes proved useful to establish not only where these ships were travelling in order to trade but to demonstrate a web of masonic connections and preference for business dealings with masonic brothers upon arrival in various ports of call. Lodges would often have representatives at key ports on the lookout for ships entering flying a masonic flag. These ships would carry news of interest to masons as well as want specifically to trade with other masons in port.

Scholarship which examines Freemasonry's role in connecting the frontier to the urban centers on the Atlantic coast is lacking. Modern Freemasonry has consistently been thought of and treated as a cosmopolitan organization. The founding constitutions of Freemasonry, the constitution of 1723 described masonry as "the Centre of Union, and the Means of conciliating

true Friendship among Persons that must have remain'd at a perpetual Distance." These cosmopolitan ideas became the norm in masonic activities and correspondence. Masonry stressed that ideas of universal brotherhood and morality were supposed to unite all men. While these are certainly Enlightenment ideas, the fact remains that masons went through the same initiation rituals in London, Paris, Montreal, Detroit, or Mackinaw. Freemasons were clearly active in a frontier context.¹⁹

This dissertation looks at the shared history and links from the Great Lakes to the Atlantic world, as demonstrated by Freemasons who were active traders, military officers, and government officials. These links had political, cultural, and economic aspects. Given the harsh environments these masons faced in trading posts and small settlements, this study also demonstrates that masons were more involved in frontier settlement than previously considered. The "cosmopolitan fraternity" needs to be reconsidered regarding its activities away from the metropole. It is hoped that this study may add to the current discussion of both Atlantic history and Freemasonry.

¹⁹ Jan C. Jansen, "In Search of Atlantic Sociability: Freemasons, Empires, and Atlantic History," *Conference Reports: Bulletin of the GHI* (2015): 80.

Chapter I: The History, Philosophy and Spread of Freemasonry

The early history of Freemasonry is still a source of conjecture and debate. The earliest associations and practices of Freemasons will probably never be fully evaluated and understood. There is simply not enough surviving material to trace the history of the fraternity fully. In addition, up until recently academic historians largely avoided looking at the masons as a source of academic inquiry. This was aided by fantastic origin legends linking the masons to everything from the Druids to the Devil and conspiracy theories that seem to withstand the tests of time and reappear in popular culture with surprisingly regularity. Freemasonry has been connected in legends and tales to the Illuminati, Rosicrucian, and the medieval Knights Templar's. In the early eighteenth century, when masonry was growing and expanding, these origins created a strong bond and fictive kinship network of Brothers and to doubt or question these assertions was anathema. To a degree this trend has persisted today, further driving away both academic scholars and amateur historians. If one lays aside these earlier ideas and theories and shifts attention to a masonry which is better documented and understood, what then is the history of the Fraternity?²⁰ This chapter intends to discuss the legends that some masons used to form the roots of the fraternity as well as the philosophical underpinning of the organization. The spread of masonry, its founding documents, growing pains, and reasons for its popularity and success will also be examined. While this not a detailed analysis into the history of masonry, it is intended to provide a basis of understanding as to why so many would choose to join and what benefits were gained by becoming a member.

²⁰ A.S. MacBride, *Speculative Masonry, Its Mission, Its Evolution and Its Landmarks. Being a Series of Lectures Delivered at the Lodge of Instruction in Connection with Lodge Progress, Glasgow No. 873.* (Kingsport, Tennessee: Southern Publishers, Inc. Masonic Publications Division, 1924), 133-138.

Of particular importance for this study is the fight between the “Ancients” and the “Moderns.” According to the founding documents, “No private Piques and Quarrels must be brought within the Door of the Lodge, far less any quarrels about Religion, or Nations, or State Policy....” While evidence suggests that most eighteenth-century masons lived by this idea. Irish, Scottish, and English lodges containing members from diverse social, religious and political backgrounds meet in peace. However, freemasonry did not exist in a vacuum, isolated from the rest of the world. There were numerous internal conflicts that in spite of the rules and ideas of universal brotherhood caused a schism that lasted decades.²¹

At the heart of the conflict was the elitist nature of the Premier Grand Lodge, the “Moderns” in the face of a wave of Irish masonic immigrants to London in the 1750’s, most came from the lower classes. These immigrants, instead of trying to join the Premier Lodge, would form their own Grand Lodge, the “Ancients.” In the end, political pressure and the realization that the rivalry served the interest of neither grand lodge would contribute to reconciliation, but not before the Ancients opened masonry up to the middle and lower classes, rapidly expanding masonry in the colonies and Great Lakes region.²² Before one can understand the nature of the schism, it is necessary to examine the foundations of Freemasonry, its origins and philosophy.

Masonic symbolism and lore are connected to an account of human progress that is commonly known as the “Traditional History.” Many of the Masonic rituals and degrees are set in a mythical past. These ceremonies should be thought of as an expression of this “Traditional

²¹ Róbert Péter, Ed., *British Freemasonry, 1717-1813, Volume 5: Representations*, (London: Routledge, 2016), 141.

²² Ibid., 143, 146.

History.” The foundation of that history is laid out in the *Old Charges*. The *Old Charges* are a collection of around 58 documents, with the oldest dating to the 14th century.²³ Collectively, the rules, regulations, and legends contained in these documents are incorporated into the “Traditional History,” and the constitutions, which were printed in 1722.²⁴ The constitutions are derived from the *Old Charges* and form the basis of modern Grand Lodge Freemasonry, while the same time reinforced masonic continuity as a century’s old institution. Furthermore, the constitutions guide Grand Lodge operations and established Masonic jurisprudence.

In these ritual degree ceremonies, events and people from mythical histories became interwoven with thinking, developments, and ideas of brotherhood from the classical world, through the middle ages and into the enlightenment. Masonry became associated with the progress of humanity as observed in the arts, architecture, science and religion. This fictive kinship has been used to impress outsiders as well as attract new members. At the same time, scholars have looked at these events and history as simply fraudulent and then largely ignored masonry as a source of historical inquiry. The “Traditional History” is probably best thought of as a form of fictive kinship that attempts to chart human progress and place masonry within this context. Masonic legends provide a placement and role for the fraternity, also known as the “craft” in history. Masons are encouraged to cultivate the arts and sciences and this history takes a long durée approach, reaching back to biblical events such as the building of Solomon’s

²³ Albert G. Mackey, *Encyclopedia of Freemasonry and Kindred Sciences, Comprising the Whole Range of the Arts, Sciences, and Literature of the Masonic Institution, Volume 2*. (New York: The Masonic History Company, 1878), 618-620. These pages contain a list of the Old Charge documents.

²⁴ For a reprint of the Charges of 1722 see: Albert G. Mackey, *Encyclopedia of Freemasonry and Kindred Sciences, Comprising the Whole Range of the Arts, Sciences, and Literature of the Masonic Institution, Volume 1*. (New York: The Masonic History Company, 1878), 191-195.

Temple. Masonic history is derived from those events, leading up to the formation of the Grand Lodge of England in 1717. With the Masonic legends understood, how do they relate to the written record, and what do those sources say about the history of the craft?²⁵

Freemasonry, like many guilds trace its origins back to the medieval stonemason guilds of England and Scotland. These operative craft guilds developed methods to protect and transfer their methods, techniques, and other complex information. Apprentices were admitted into guilds, learned the crafts, became masters and ultimately moved on and started their own practices. It is not dissimilar to trade schools today. Like trade schools today, there needed to be some way to recognize mastery of the subject. Today, degrees and certificates from accredited programs serve to prove competency. Hundreds of years ago, long apprenticeships and final acknowledgement from the heads of one's guild served the same purpose. At all times, trade secrets had to be protected, and a mason needed modes and methods to recognize another mason. This created a collection of passwords, symbols, and hand grips to ascertain if a mason was talking to another vetted mason.²⁶

²⁵ Christopher B. Murphy and Shawn Eyer, Eds, *Exploring Early Grand Lodge Freemasonry, Studies in Honor of the Tricentennial of the Establishment of the Grand Lodge of England*. (Washington, D.C.: Plumbstone, 2017), 7-52. James Anderson provides an account of the Traditional History, which is needed to better understand the early Grand Lodge and the legends and myths that all Freemasons are aware of. Some interpret these more literally than others.

²⁶ Chris Besmir Ruli, "Cornerstone Men, The History of the Early Freemasons in Georgetown," *Washington History* 31 (2019): 84.

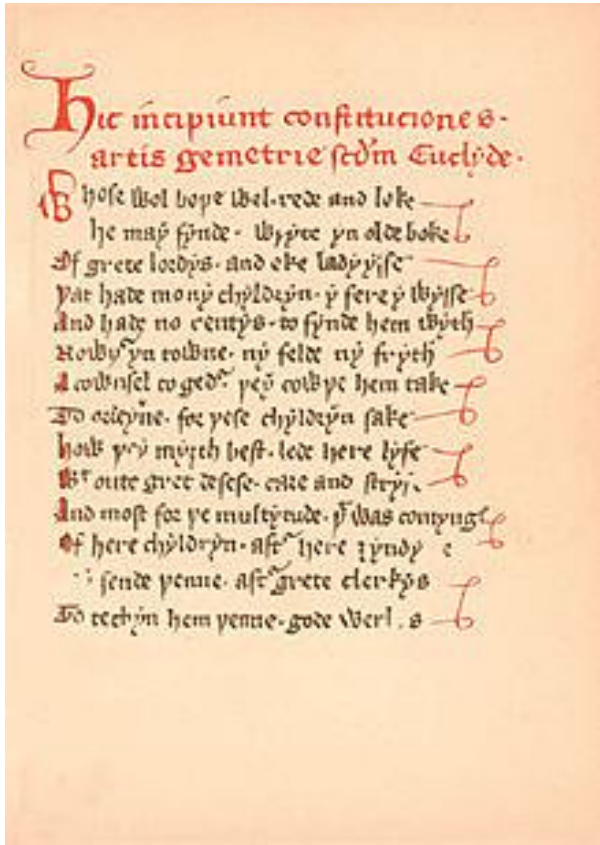


Figure 1: Example of the Regius Manuscript

The Halliwell Manuscript, also known as the Regius Poem, is the oldest known record of the Old Charges. The document was written in a poetic form and dates to around 1390 but was likely copied from an earlier document. The document is in the King's Library of the British Museum and was published in 1840 by James Halliwell, hence the name. It was published a second time in 1844 under the title: *The Early History of Freemasonry in England*. The masonic nature of the poem remained unknown until its discovery by Halliwell, who was not a Freemason,

because the poem was catalogued as, *A Poem of Moral Duties*. Today, it is more commonly known as the *Regius Manuscript*, because it formed part of the royal library which began under Henry VII and was presented to the British Museum by George II.²⁷ The poem contains about 800 lines and 15 articles, which are instructions concerning the behavior and professionalism of a craftsman. These "Old Charges" form the basis for masonic jurisprudence and the methods for governing a lodge.

²⁷ Albert G. Mackey, *Encyclopedia of Freemasonry and Kindred Sciences, Comprising the Whole Range of the Arts, Sciences, and Literature of the Masonic Institution Volume 1*. (New York: The Masonic History Company, 1878), 433-434.

Freemasonry has always associated itself with the advancement of the arts and sciences, and the *Regius Manuscript* discusses many of these topics. Of the seven arts and sciences of Freemasonry, geometry is the most important. The manuscript states:

And pray we them, for our Lord's sake,
 To our children some work to make,
 That they might get their living thereby,
 Both well and honestly full securely,
 In that time, through good geometry,
 This honest craft of good masonry
 Was ordained and made in this manner,
 Counterfeited of these clerks together;
 At these lords' prayers they
 counterfeited geometry,
 And gave it the name if masonry...

Geometry provides the foundation for masonry, both as operative and speculative masonry. Operative masons were the actual stone masons of the middle ages and classical era, who built the castles, cathedrals, monuments, etc. By the eighteenth-century, the days of building such structures were coming to a close; the days of the stone masons guilds were numbered, or at least in a sustained and sharp decline. People joined these guilds as a non-operative masons, or speculative masons.

Speculative masons came to dominate the stone mason guilds which became entirely speculative over time. Speculative lodges became the Freemasons. This does not explain why members of the aristocracy, gentry, merchant class, and leading thinkers of the Enlightenment would want to join a stone mason's guild. Several theories have been proposed. Speculative masons were interested in the heavily ritualized associative life and secrecy, along with the conviviality and friendships that developed among its members. Operative stonemasons likely

saw the outsiders as a new source of dues and, given the social status of many of its new members, a source of prestige for their guild to the public at large.²⁸

It seems that speculative masons had been a part of the operative guilds for centuries. The *Cook Manuscript*, one of the *Old Charges*, which dates at around 1450, mentions Prince Edwin who is associated with the tenth-century King Athelstan. Regarding masonry, the manuscript states, of “Prince Edwin” that “of speculative he was a master,” demonstrating that Edwin may have had an interest in geometry and masonry. Another example is from the diary of Elias Ashmole which dates to 1646. Ashmole states that “Oct. 16th, 4:30 P.M. I was made a Free Mason at Warrington in Lancashire,” Ashmole also became a member of the Royal Society, which was engaged in their own recruiting efforts. It is not possible to say with certainty why stone mason guilds adapted in this way, while others did not. Numerous theories exist with a prevailing one suggesting that in the fifteenth-century, Henry VIII dissolved monasteries and many Catholic buildings were destroyed. New protestant orders looked at these huge stone buildings with disdain. Churches and castles with no longer being erected, thus leading to a massive decline in guild membership. The civil wars would further exhaust the nation. As operative masons declined roles in lodges show an increase of speculative masons. By the eighteenth-century these lodges would become entirely speculative.²⁹

This phenomenon was not unique to masonic guilds. Other organizations were accepting members for reasons other than their stated purposes. For example, the Royal

²⁸ Kenneth Loiselle, *Brotherly Love, Freemasonry and Male Friendship in Enlightenment France*. (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2017), 21.

²⁹ H.L. Haywood, “How Operative Masonry Changed to Speculative Masonry,” *Chapters of Masonic History*, *The Builder Magazine*, Vol. 10, (1924). http://www.freemasons-freemasonry.com/operative_speculative_masons.html

Society, in the eighteenth-century accepted Fellows into the society who “saw themselves as patrons and sometime observers rather than as regular practitioners of science.” They simply intended to pay their dues, read the journal and occasionally attend meetings. In return, the society received additional dues and funds for its scientists to carry out experiments, publish data and organize expeditions.³⁰

Masons, regardless of rank in society, meet as equals in the lodge. This notion of equality is discussed in the Regius Manuscript:

But Masons should never one another call,
 Within the craft amongst them all,
 Neither subject nor servant, my dear brother,
 Though he be not so perfect as is another;
 Each shall call other fellows by cuthe, (friendship)
 Because they come of ladies birth.
 On this manner, through good wit of geometry,
 Began first the craft of masonry:³¹

Notions of equality and certain political views in an aristocratic society could certainly be viewed as treasonous by some citizens. This might help to explain the secrecy of meetings, including having an armed guard, known as the Tyler, outside the door. For example, in the 1740s, the Parisian police arrested, searched, and interrogated a group of Freemasons. This event is known because the report of what happened made its way to the records housed in the Bastille. Spies and a local priest had helped the authorities gather the information. The detailed reports of this new and mysterious group and their activities concerned the

³⁰ Richard Sorrenson. “Towards a History of the Royal Society in the Eighteenth Century.” Notes and Records of the Royal Society of London, Vol. 50 (1996), 33.

³¹ Albert G. Mackey, *Encyclopedia of Freemasonry and Kindred Sciences, Comprising the Whole Range of the Arts, Sciences, and Literature of the Masonic Institution Volume 1*. (New York: The Masonic History Company, 1878), 434.

government. The police asked the prisoners, “Is it not true that this assembly was for the purpose of electing a master of the lodge who in turn would choose two surveillants; is it not true that the record of the Election would be handed over to the secretary of the order who is M. Perret, notary?”³² Other questions asked about a signed act of Convocation in order to assemble for the purpose of holding elections.

The authorities were alarmed by activities, including elections, signed acts permitting an assembly, legal records prepared by a notary, an assembly to hold elections. The interrogators were equally interested if these masons met under the arms of M. the Count of Clermont, who became the Masonic Grand Master of France in 1743. The masons clearly confused the authorities. The organization had pretensions of self-government, a representative assembly, possibly composed of aliens, potentially subversive. The group and its English imported ideas seemed political, hence certainly criminal in nature and intent. Another confusing aspect of this meeting was that, while it was not uncommon for a cabal to be organized under the arms of an aristocrat, this was different. What made this group so strange was that many of the men were of ordinary status: a jeweler, a minor official of the poultry market, a gardener, and an actor and strangest of all, “a Negro who serves as a trumpeter on the Kings Guard.”³³ Other reports mention army officers, Benedictine Priests, four unmarried women, a gentleman, a bourgeois. Note, in French masonry, women were involved in the 18th century. In addition, the

³² MS Arsenal 11556, f. 300; interrogation of Nicolas Mornay, lapidary, Catholic, aged 29, received in the lodge at the Hotel de Soissons. The master of the lodge was a merchant of wine; lodge meetings also held in the apartment of Sr. Miloir: “le but de cette assemblée étoit d’élire un maître de loge qui se choisiroit deux surveillants avec mention que le process verbal d’Election seroit remis en mains du secretaire G. de l’ordre le quell est le Sieur Perret Notaire. A dit qu’oui.”

³³ Margaret A. Jacob, *Living the Enlightenment, Freemasonry and Politics in Eighteenth-Century Europe*. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), 4.

Grand Orient de France allowed women to attend many banquets and ceremonies, only barring them from certain events. Lastly, in France, Lodges of Adoption appeared in the 1740's, which were for women, generally female relatives of male masons. These were attached to a regular lodge, thus depending on the meeting; women being present were a normal occurrence. All of these people addressed each other as brother and openly talked about their loyalty to Freemasonry. Ideas of equality, democracy, brotherly love, charity, truth, etc., are documented in the *Regius Manuscript*, which was incorporated into the foundations on modern masonry, which began with the formation of the Grand Lodge of England.

The first Grand Lodge was formed in London in 1717. This occurred on St. John the Baptist's Day, June 24th, 1717, when four existing lodges gathered at the Goose and Gridiron



Figure 2: The Symbol of Freemasonry

Ale-House and constituted themselves a Grand Lodge. Prior to this, there were operative lodges; which had given way to the new speculative Freemasonry. These individual lodges were in England, Ireland and Scotland well before 1717,

but cannot be discussed in the same way as established Grand Lodge Freemasonry. The creation of the Grand Lodge ushers in the modern era of speculative Freemasonry. The Grand Lodge created a central organization with universal laws and regulations. These rules applied

to all members, regardless of rank or trade; new lodges requesting a warrant agreed to abide by the rules set forth from the Grand Lodge.³⁴

Other than the origin legends, perhaps no other facet of masonry has received more attention than ideas of a masonic religion. Masonry only requires a candidate to believe in a supreme being and the immortality of the soul. Never a “stupid Atheist, nor an irreligious Libertine” so goes section one of the Old Charges.³⁵ Beyond that, much is left open to interpretation. As the British Empire expanded, Muslims, Hindus, Jews and of course Christians, both Protestants and Catholics, became masons in large numbers. To avoid heated religious debates in lodges, masonry simply refers to the Grand Architect of the Universe as a generic term for deity which all can embrace and put their chosen religious stamp on. The most commonly known symbol of Freemasonry expresses this with the “G” in the middle of the square and compass, which are the tools of an operative mason but are ascribed with symbolic meaning by the speculative masons. The “G” has been interpreted as standing for both the Grand Architect of the Universe and alternately Geometry, the foundation of masonry. Regarding the Grand Architect of the Universe, some writers have used the generic name for deity to suggest that masons are deists. Deism is the belief in a supreme being that created the universe but does not intervene in the workings of things, thus the various revealed religions are a creation of man and not divinely inspired. Deism was a popular concept amongst the many Enlightenment thinkers and intellectuals. For example, Thomas Paine in his *Essay on the*

³⁴ Péter Róbert, Ed, *British Freemasonry, 1717-1813, Volume 1: Institutions*. (London: Routledge, 2016), lxxv.

³⁵ Albert G. Mackey, *Encyclopedia of Freemasonry and Kindred Sciences, Comprising the Whole Range of the Arts, Sciences, and Literature of the Masonic Institution Volume 1*. (New York: The Masonic History Company, 1878), 192.

Origin of Freemasonry published in 1826 suggests that masonry is “derived, and is the remains of the religion of the ancient Druids; who like the magi of Persia, and the priests of Heliopolis in Egypt, were priests of the Sun.”³⁶ In many ways, Paine is trying to make a case for deism and is attacking organized religion, using the masons as a crutch. It is not known if Paine was a mason. Many of his close associates certainly were, and his revolutionary writings were embraced in both the American and French Revolutions. Another example is the Cult of the Supreme Being, established by Freemason Maximilien Robespierre during the French Revolution as a new state religion and replacement for Roman Catholicism. This was short lived and not done in any masonic capacity. Of course the problem fundamentality with a church devoted to deism is what would be the point is having a religion devoted to a disinterested deity?

The other interpretation of the “G” is geometry, which masons view as the basis upon which all Freemasonry is built and the most prominent of all the sciences. According to Albert G. Mackey, the author of the *Encyclopedia of Freemasonry*, the science of geometry “teaches a man to mete and measure of the earth and other things, which science is masonry.” Through geometry, masons trace a lineage to the Egyptians who also cultivated geometry as a science. From Egypt, it passed through the pagan and classical worlds.³⁷ Masons also use the term “Sacred Geometry,” which attaches sacred meaning to certain shapes and structures. This idea is associated with the idea that God is the geometer of the universe. Religious structures such

³⁶ Thomas Paine, *An Essay on the Origin of Free Masonry*. (London: R. Carlile, 62, Fleet Street, 1826), 5. Reprinted by Scholar Select.

³⁷ Albert G. Mackey, *Encyclopedia of Freemasonry and Kindred Sciences, Comprising the Whole Range of the Arts, Sciences, and Literature of the Masonic Institution, Volume 1*. (New York: The Masonic History Company, 1878), 400-401.

as churches, cathedrals, temples, mosques, tabernacles etc., were planned and built with a secret knowledge of sacred geometry, numerology, and other ancient mysteries. These ideas trace their origins to Plutarch who attributed the idea to Plato, who wrote “God geometrizes continually.” These ideas link mathematics and geometry to the study of the universe and nature and form the basis for what is more of a masonic philosophy but certainly not any sort of official religion.

Beyond the philosophical aspects of Freemasonry, the fraternity offered many tangible benefits that induced men to petition a lodge. Thomas Dunckerley (c. 1720-1795) was an active mason for most of his adult life. He served as Provincial Grand Master of eight masonic provinces, presided over Royal Arch Masonry in eleven counties, and commanded both the English Knights Templar and the Royal Ark Masons. He wrote and delivered speeches on many topics. Some of the core aspects of masonry that Dunckerley stressed were: brotherly love, relief, and truth. He called these masonic virtues, and he was not alone. Other contemporary masonic writers, such as William Preston, Wellins Calcott, and Laurence Dermott echoed these ideas.

Dunckerley delivered a speech on these topics to the Members of the Lodge of Free and Accepted Masons, held at the Castle-Inn, Marlborough in 1769. In his speech he stressed that charity “is the basis of our order.” The Grand Lodges existed among other reasons, because the individual lodges collect dues and charitable contributions, which are sent to the Grand Lodge to which “the distressed brethren apply.” With regards to the brethren, Dunckerley states that, “For in the sight of God we are all equally his children....so we in like manner look on *every* free mason as our brother; or regard where he was born or educated, provided he is a good

man....”³⁸ In traveling throughout the world, a brother will always be a true friend who will always come to the aid of a distressed mason and provide relief. Brothers are supposed to aid and help each other.

To Dunckerley, Brotherly Love logically followed in lock step with charity (relief). Dunckerley looked at this as a spiritual issue, the generous principles of the soul which unite humanity as one family, created by an all-wise being, which draws in and unites all men. This universal brotherhood as described by Dunckerley “draws men together and unites them in bodies politic, families, societies, and the various orders and denominations among men.” He goes on to say that most of those are confined to a particular country, religion, family, etc. By contract Freemasonry provides an order to “unite mankind as one family: High and low, rich and poor, with one another; to adore that same God and observe his law.” All masons are free to travel and visit every lodge in every nation on earth. It would not matter if one did not know the customs or language as Masons had modes of recognition, known only to them and through them, that would gain a mason entry to any lodge, anywhere.³⁹

Truth was thought to be a divine attribute and the foundation of all masonic virtues. Masons are taught to be “good men and true.... it not sufficient that we walk / in the light, unless we do the truth. All hypocrisy and deceit must be banished from us....” Brothers should always act sincerely and plainly towards each other both in and out of the lodge. In doing so, Dunckerley maintains that is how a mason makes himself acceptable to the great being “unto whom all hearts are open, all desires known, and from whom no secrets are hid.” Masons are

³⁸ Róbert Péter, Ed, *British Freemasonry, 1717-1813, Volume 1: Institutions*. (London: Routledge, 2016), 108-111.

³⁹ Ibid., 112.

admonished to act truthfully and to search for the truth in all things, science, philosophy, and the arts. By this search, one lives a life of wisdom, virtue, and happiness.⁴⁰

Many masonic documents and speeches discuss these various principles and virtues, and given how many lodges and brothers there are scattered around the globe, it has been a remarkably successful system. However, Freemasonry also went through its own growing pains and a schism that lasted decades. This split had a large impact on the American colonies and the growth of masonry. Lodges could not always verify the authenticity of a certificate or the trustworthiness of a man presenting himself at a lodge as a Freemason or a brother in need of relief. There are many examples of Grand Lodges stressing the need to verify a brother's membership. There were far too many travelling brethren and "masonic mendicants" seeking indiscriminate and profuse relief.⁴¹ Many of these have been shown to be imposters travelling from lodge to lodge, begging for relief and causing mistrust throughout the fraternity. Grand Lodges normalized the ritual, passwords, and handgrips, which when taken together constituted a masonic language that was universal in the colonies and metropole. Knowledge of Freemasonry became the key to gain entry into lodges around the world.

Enlightenment minded people were drawn to its combination of modern science, ancient religion, and universal brotherhood. The fraternity grew during the Enlightenment, the culture of which encouraged order and rationality, within various clubs, societies, and in society in general. Masonry was unique by being socially, religiously, and politically flexible. Masons

⁴⁰ Ibid., 113.

⁴¹ Robert Freke Gould, *A Library of Freemasonry Comprising its History, Antiquities, Symbols, Constitutions, Customs, Etc., and Concordant Orders of Royal Arch, Knights Templar, A.A.S. Rite, Mystic Shrine, with other Important Masonic Information of Value to the Fraternity, Derived from Official and Standard Sources Throughout the World.* (London: The John C. Yorston Publishing Company, 1911), 17.

clearly had links to religion but allowed broad interpretations that prevented it from becoming sectarian. Initiation rituals provided a powerful emotional experience that blended Christianity, Eastern Religions, Deism and ancient esoteric ideas. This system embraced ideas of brotherhood, inclusion, scientific innovation and embodied Enlightenment ideas with symbolism and mystic philosophy. The combination had broad appeal and could speak to people with different political, social, religious, economic, and educational backgrounds. In short, masonry did not exist to combat any evil, solve any particular problem, or advance any philosophy, religion, cult or dogma, but aspects of all of those were found in masonry. Masonry does not say that it will build a utopian state or society. It is not a political or economic system. It does not teach science, but science hold an important place in it. It is not the sole product of any particular nation, people, or creed and has received contributions from diverse peoples all over the world. Perhaps the ambiguity of what masonry was is why it had such broad appeal. It offered something for everyone and members could put their stamp on masonry and focus on where their interests were.⁴²

Even the best intentions and loftiest of ideas can run into problems with put into practice. Early in the development of Grand Lodge Freemasonry, there were arguments and infighting regarding historical timelines and lodge supremacy. This fighting caused a schism and instability to the entire masonic world. No longer was masonry a uniform group of brothers who had gone through the same initiation experiences. Identifying a fellow mason became

⁴² A.S. MacBride, *Speculative Masonry, Its Mission, Its Evolution and Its Landmarks. Being a Series of Lectures Delivered at the Lodge of Instruction in Connection with Lodge Progress, Glasgow, No. 873.* (Kingsport: Tennessee, Southern Publications, Inc. Masonic Publications Division, 1924), 26.

difficult. Interestingly this schism resulted in more lodges opening and a greater societal demographic showing interest in joining masonry.

Scottish lodges were also undergoing the transformation from operative to speculative Freemasonry and created the Grand Lodge of Scotland in 1736. Likewise, Ireland had operative lodges that were becoming speculative and founded their Grand Lodge in 1725. Many masons claimed that the Grand Lodge of York was the first English Grand Lodge, not the 1717 Grand Lodge of London and Westminster. This claim was based on the tradition that the Anglo-Saxon Prince Edwin held an assembly of masons in York in 926 AD. There is no surviving evidence that this occurred; however, a Prince Edwin existed in relation to King Athelstan, dating to around the early tenth century. Edwin also appeared as a witness to Athelstan's signature on an extant charter at Winchester. The Anglo-Saxon scribe Bede wrote about King Edwin of Northumbria, who was baptized at York Cathedral in 627. This reference caused some masons to claim that King Edwin was the Grand Master in York and the Anglo-Saxon ruler of all England when Northumbria was a powerful kingdom.⁴³

The position of the Grand Lodge of York was clear. York was the ancient northern capital and had an ancient right as a Grand Lodge. It was the cultural rival of London. This position was advanced by Dr. Francis Drake, who published a book called: *The History and Antiquities of the City of York, from its Original to the Present Time; together with the History of the Cathedral Church and the Lives of the Archbishops of that See*, which was published in 1736. There were hundreds of subscribers for the volume; not surprisingly, many were members of

⁴³ Christopher B. Murphy and Shawn Eyer, Eds, *Exploring Early Grand Lodge Freemasonry, Studies in Honor of the Tricentennial of the Establishment of the Grand Lodge of England*. (Washington, D.C.: Plumbstone, 2017), 314.

the Grand Lodge of York. The book and Drake argued that William the Conqueror was chiefly responsible for London's rise to prominence, and York was ravaged under William. This was what brought the once superior Roman city down, making it the second place city in the kingdom, a theme that was reflected in the treatment of the York Grand Lodge by its London rival. York was the cultural center in the north. It had a vibrant literary, intellectual and scientific scene.⁴⁴ In spite of these arguments and the cosmopolitan vibrancy of the city, the last minutes recorded for the Grand Lodge of York was on August 23rd, 1792. It is thought that the lodge was absorbed into other lodges. Masonry, like many other groups had its growing pains. Ideas of universal brotherhood and benevolence mixed with a fraternity that was trying to establish uniform regulations. Arguments as to what the correct way forward would lead to infighting. The rival Grand Lodges of Scotland, Ireland and England were all in operation at the same time. In the 1750's, a new Grand Lodge emerged in London. This lodge called itself the Grand Lodge of the Ancients, and was a challenge to the Premier Grand Lodge of England. The "Ancients" insisted that the Grand Lodge of England had strayed from true Freemasonry and the *Old Charges* and began calling them, "Moderns." These two lodges had a schism that was not resolved until 1813.

This rival Grand Lodge most likely emerged from the activities of Irish Masons in London. Ireland, of course, had its own Grand Lodge, but in the 1740's an agricultural crises in Ireland caused famine and disease, prompting an exodus. Many of these masons arrived in London looking for work, a new start, and continued masonic activities. The Irish masons chose to start their own lodges as opposed to joining existing lodges in the city. There are various

⁴⁴ Ibid., 315.

reasons for this. Irish Masonry had differences in their rituals from English Masonry. These could almost amount to differences in dogma, and not easy to reconcile. Also, groups that migrate together want to maintain cultural identity and security. The English Grand Lodge recruited members from the upper levels of society and anti-Irish sentiments among many Englishmen may have played a role in the English Grand Lodge not welcoming the displaced brothers. In addition, the English Grand Lodge by the 1740's had become a bit lax. Masonry had spread quickly, and the Grand Lodge was inefficient at communicating with new lodges and administering a rapidly growing institution. Moreover, poor leadership had not addressed these growing problems or challenged these new upstart Irish lodges. The result was that by the 1750's there were six Irish lodges, and they met at the Turks Head Tavern in Soho. There they established the Grand Committee of the Most Ancient and Honorable Society of Free and Accepted Masons. Essentially, they established a Grand Lodge to challenge the "Premier" Grand Lodge in England.⁴⁵

In a few years, the number of lodges affiliated with the Ancient Grand Lodge went from six to 36. Englishmen, Scots and Irish joined the lodges. Of note, these masons were from the middling ranks of society. Artisans, professionals, and tradesmen began to join the Ancient lodges in large numbers. The Ancient Grand Lodge, in contrast to the Premier Grand Lodge, was well organized and administered. They quickly established a set of rules and regulations, laying out conditions for membership and codes of conduct for individual lodges. Lodges would be granted warrants numerically in order to keep records straight, and would be required to

⁴⁵ Jessica L. Harland-Jacobs, *Builders of Empire, Freemasonry and British Imperialism, 1717-1927*. (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2007), 26-27.

submit reports on fee collections, new members, and general business records.⁴⁶ Moreover, the Ancients were better at marketing. By using the term “Modern,” the Ancients had hit on a key sticking point of English clubs and society. Clubs with long well-established lineages and roots conferred a sense of legitimacy. Innovators and clubs trying to change the well-established norms could be viewed with suspicion and alarm, thus hurting recruitment. While the Premier Grand Lodge was older in years, the Ancients were able to claim that they had been forced to establish their lodge because the Premier Lodge was not practicing true masonry.

The Premier Grand Lodge, finally realizing the magnitude of the threat posed by the Ancients, declared them to be irregular Freemasons and dismissed them as lower class Irish masons practicing false Masonic rituals. This elitism hurt the Premier Grand Lodge, both in recruiting new masons as well as in their fight with the Ancient. The Ancients would say elitism goes against masonic ideas of universal brotherhood and demonstrates how the Premier Lodge had lost its way. In 1765 the Premier Grand Lodge published: *A Defense of Free-Masonry, as Practiced in the Regular Lodges, both Foreign and Domestic under the Constitution of the English Grand Master*. In the defense, the author gives a “true *Portrait* of those *Deceivers*, and false *Brethren*,” and warns regular masons to “guard against all their *Innovations*, Illicit, irregular, and ridiculous *Forms* and *Ceremonies*....and to not suffer any of their *Brethren* to become Members with those *sham* Ancients....”⁴⁷

The attack on the lower classes had been something going on in the Premier Grand Lodge for many years, and ran in opposition to the masonic tenants of universal brotherhood.

⁴⁶ Ibid., 27.

⁴⁷ Róbert Péter, Ed., *British Freemasonry, 1717-1813, Volume 4: Debates*. (London: Routledge, 2016), 148.

In 1721, when the first nobleman assumed the master position of the Premier Grand Lodge, English Freemasonry focused its attention on recruiting members from the ranks of the aristocrats and well-educated gentlemen. Premier Grand Lodge Masonry drew its members from the highest levels of society and gentry. By contrast, the Ancients drew their membership from the levels below the gentry and gentlemen. These were men “of some Education and an honest Character, but low in Circumstances.”⁴⁸ However, to add legitimacy to their grand lodge, the Ancients looked for a Grand Master from the ranks of the nobility. When an English noble could not be found, they turned their attention to Scottish and Irish nobility. In this, they were successful. From 1756 every Ancient Grand Master was either a Scottish or Irish peer.⁴⁹ This infighting amongst masons would have profound consequences for masonry in the North American colonies.

By the end of the eighteenth-century, the various Grand Lodges had established and maintained regular communications with each other, vowing always to act in a way that benefitted Freemasonry and, in 1813, the *Articles of Union between the Two Grand Lodges of Freemasons of England* was signed.⁵⁰ This was made possible by the combined efforts of the two grand lodges and several key masons. Moira Hastings, who was born in Ireland, was an important British officer, who was appointed Commander in Chief of the military in Scotland. In 1804, he convinced the Grand Lodge of Scotland to start correspondence with the Moderns. By

⁴⁸ Jessica L. Harland-Jacobs, *Builders of Empire, Freemasonry and British Imperialism, 1717-1927*. (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2007), 29.

⁴⁹ Ibid., 30.

⁵⁰ For a re-print of the Articles of Union, see: Péter Róbert, Ed, *British Freemasonry, 1717-1813, Volume 1: Institutions*. (London: Routledge, 2016), 395-403.

1810, the Grand Lodge of Scotland officially recognized both the Ancients and Modern Grand Lodges. Moira held acting Grand Master positions until the Prince of Wales, who was the Grand Master of the Moderns (1792-1812), was also elected Grand Master of Scotland in 1806 and retained that title until 1820. Just prior to the 1813 Union, the Duke of Sussex was appointed the Grand Master of the Moderns, while his brother, the Duke of Kent became the Grand Master of the Ancients. In what was almost a family affair the Duke of Sussex worked to achieve the union and remain at the head of the United Grand Lodge of England until 1843. In a show of masonic brotherhood, his brother stepped down. A Lodge of Reconciliation was held with an equal number of Ancient and Modern Brothers in attendance along with representatives from the Scottish and Irish Grand Lodges to ensure that the reconciliation was conducted properly.⁵¹

The schism between the lodges had several repercussions. The rise and rapid spread of Ancient masonry forced the grand lodges to organize and regulate their subordinate lodges around the world. Ancient Freemasonry also broadened the demographics from which men were joining and becoming masons. Recruiting Scottish, Irish, and English brothers into one lodge created a blended masonry that would become more British and more acceptable to

⁵¹ Ibid, 392-393. Note, Parliament had recently passed An Act for the More Effectual Suppression of Societies Established for Seditious and Treasonable Purposes, and for Better Preventing Treasonable and Seditious Practices (1799), see pages 333-341. While masonic lodges were viewed as safe, they had made oaths of loyalty to George III, and Lord Hastings had gone to Parliament to ensure Freemasonry was safe. It certainly helped that many aristocrats were Brothers. By joining the Grand Lodges, masons would speak with one unified voice and would avoid entanglements with groups such as the *Societies of United Englishmen, United Scotsmen, United Britons, United Irishmen* and *The London Corresponding Society*. While this would help the masons, the geo-political reality of the late eighteenth century was one where British Jacobins had fully supported the French Revolution and many known Freemasons were active in the revolution. These masons communicated with their English Brothers and other radical groups and were a source of concern for the Parliament. As an aside, this act would not be repealed until 1967. From 1799-1967, lodges had to release their meeting minutes and membership details, providing a wealth of information for scholars interested in Freemasonry.

more people. This was aided by the grand lodges developing regular relations among themselves.

The Ancients and Irish Grand Lodge would have a large impact on the development of masonry in the North American colonies. As will be seen, the ambulatory lodges were vital to the spread of masonry throughout the Grand Lakes region. The Irish Grand Lodge was key to the spread of masonry, in that it began the practice of issuing warrants to military regiments. In the 1720's a warrant was essentially a permission slip to form a new lodge. In around 1731, the Irish Grand Lodge took the warrant further, by stating that its warrants comprised the necessary documentation to open and operate a lodge. A warrant from the Grand Lodge of Ireland was a charter to open, meet, hold lodge, and initiate new masons. British military regiments established themselves on the frontier. Wherever an ambulatory lodge moved, it took its warrant. This warrant was proof of being a lawfully constituted lodge. In addition, the grand lodge issued these warrants sequentially, which allowed for proper record keeping at the grand lodge level. Military lodges throughout the Great Lakes region formed the nucleus of masonry there, often being replaced by civilian lodges after the regiments redeployed elsewhere.

Freemasonry, while thought of as a predominately cosmopolitan organization, played an important role on the frontiers of the Great Lakes region. The province of Quebec for example, was a wilderness. East of Ottawa, in the mid eighteenth century, there were few towns and most of those were just a "clearing in the forest." West of Ottawa was forest so dense that even the most resolute pioneer searching for skins or a new farmstead would travel by the rivers and lakes, if only to avoid "an encounter with the wild dwellers of the forest." It was in

this environment that the early ambulatory lodges formed. Except for Quebec and Montreal, there were no cities or towns. Lodges existed with regiments in the sparsely inhabited settlements that dotted the coastline over long distances. Brothers who sought light in Masonry and a break from the rigors of life on the frontier had a place to meet and share fellowship. Lodges on the frontier created a culture where officers, enlisted soldiers and civilians could come together creating a bond and network that would spread throughout the region.⁵²

Beyond the military lodges, the Ancients appealed to the more humble and more numerous members of lower social ranks. The Ancient Lodges were better organized and responded to petitions in the expanding frontier by warranting far more lodges than the Moderns. These class differences between the groups were demonstrable regarding occupations and tax assessments. The 1771 assessment of the merchandise and factorage held by Ancient merchants averaged less than one-third that of Modern merchants and the earliest roll for Philadelphia Moderns had no merchants on its roles at all. Two-thirds of the Philadelphia and more than one-quarter of the Boston Ancients are listed on the roles as mechanics, artisans, and small retailers.⁵³

Tax assessments also show a disparity between the Ancients and Moderns. In Boston in 1771, Ancients' real estate assessments were about half of what the Moderns held and twice as many Moderns were noted for ownership of buildings beyond their own homes. In

⁵² John Ross Robertson, *The History of Freemasonry in Canada, from its Introduction in 1749, Compiled and Written From Official Records and From Mss. Covering the Period From 1749-1858, in the Possession of the Author, Volume 1, Part 1.* (Toronto: George N. Morang and Co. Ltd., 1900), 20-21.

⁵³ Steven C. Bullock, *Revolutionary Brotherhood, Freemasonry and the Transformation of the American Social Order, 1730-1840.* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1996), 90-93.

Philadelphia in 1756 the difference is also striking. Only about one-quarter of the Ancients ranked as high as the top nine-tenths of the Moderns. Moreover, about one-quarter of the Moderns were assessed higher than any of the Ancients. What led to the Ancients' success was the changing socio-economic conditions in the American colonies. The colonies were no longer the elite and everyone else. There was a growing number of tradesmen, merchants, artisans, etc. who were becoming financially well off but not so much as to enter the upper levels of society from which the Moderns drew their membership.⁵⁴

The spread of Ancient Masonry followed the military lodges, expansion and settlement along the frontiers and the establishment of new ports and towns. By being a mason, even an Ancient one, a brother had connections with other Ancient brothers in the urban areas. This added some level of acceptance and prestige to the brethren operating on the frontier. Modern Masons seemed content to operate in the cities and key ports along the Eastern Seaboard. They showed little interest in expanding inland. For example, the Pennsylvania Modern Grand Lodge, in its over 40 years existence, only warranted three lodges, all of which were in Philadelphia. The Modern Grand Lodge of Massachusetts was far more active than Pennsylvania. It chartered over 40 lodges but most of them were for lodges that were formed in seaports in other colonies. Only five of the lodges were in Massachusetts, and all were along the coastline. By contrast, the Ancients in Pennsylvania set up eight lodges in the state by the time of the American Revolution, and in Massachusetts the Ancients established eleven lodges outside Boston as well as four in New Hampshire and two in Vermont. It must be remembered that the Ancients were the late-comers to North America; the Moderns had been in the

⁵⁴ Ibid., 93-94.

colonies for decades.⁵⁵ Ancient masonry continued to spread into the frontier following merchants, traders and military regiments. After the Revolutionary War, each state formed its own Grand Lodge, mostly removing the Ancient vs. Modern rivalry in the new United States.

Masonry, from the creation of the first Grand Lodge in 1717, was able to appeal to many people from all walks of life. After the tumultuous events of the English Civil War and the endless wars in Europe, many organizations of the Enlightenment era were stressing tolerance, civility and open-mindedness. These Enlightenment ideas fit perfectly well with Freemasonry. Masonry provided different things to different members. Lodges were places where different religions and philosophies could be discussed. Ancient mysteries from the east were discussed along with Egyptian magic and ideas from the new world. New scientific discoveries were debated along with new political ideas. For brothers who travelled, lodges provided a home away from home where they could establish new contacts, negotiate business deals, and, if need be, find charitable relief. For others, the lodges simply provided fellowship and a place to have a few drinks, sing songs and share an evening with friends. This broad appeal largely worked. Masonry was mostly apolitical, religious but not dogmatic. With ideas of universal brotherly love, it retained a sense of gentility and openness without the exclusiveness of aristocratic society. This big tent fraternity served the military lodges and traders of the Great Lakes region well as they extended their networks from the lakes back to London.

⁵⁵ Ibid., 102.

Chapter II: Military Masonic Lodges and the Spread of Freemasonry

Masonic Lodges were chartered in military Regiments, many of which served in North America during the Seven Years War. The travelling lodges were present at the fall of Quebec and Montreal and garrisoned many forts and outposts on the frontier. As regiments re-deployed, civilians who had become Masons would often petition a Grand Lodge for a warrant to form a permanent lodge. These Masonic ties transcended national, cultural, ethnic, and military boundaries, creating a network of Brothers throughout Canada and the Great Lakes region. After the Seven Years War and Revolutionary War ended, many of these former officers, and soldiers pursued civilian occupations such as merchants, ship captains, business leaders and politicians. They would leverage their fraternal connections, creating a network of Brothers helping Brothers.

This chapter looks at the formation of the ambulatory or military lodges. These lodges pushed west as the frontier expanded at the conclusion of the Seven Years War. Military outposts and trading posts were often one and the same. Masonic lodges would be established at many of these locations. Men from many backgrounds would join these lodges, including Native Americans. Brothers from these lodges would create nodes in a network linking fur traders from the frontier to the eastern seaboard and from there to Europe.

When one thinks of the British military, one often thinks of strict discipline and order, aristocratic officers in crisp uniforms calmly giving orders under fire and being the embodiment of a professional military class. While this is true and the British military was a model of efficiency and regimentation, the introduction of Freemasonry and the creation of military masonic lodges was anything but an orderly progression. The practice of granting warrants to

Masons in the Army and Navy gave them the authority to form new lodges that were attached to regiments and other units, including a few ships. The practice of granting warrants seems to have originated with the Grand Lodge of Ireland. Later, the Grand Lodges of England and Scotland also encouraged and supported the idea. The situation was further complicated by warrants being granted by various Antients (Ancient) and Modern Lodges. The confusing nature of whose authority a lodge operated under and the instability of these ambulatory lodges suggest that record keeping was difficult. Wherever the warrant was, the lodge was also. While many travelling lodges' records are at best incomplete, these military lodges played an important role in spreading Freemasonry and in many places laid the foundation for future stationary lodges. This whole process was further complicated by shifting political and colonial boundaries, which altered whose Grand Lodge had authority over a given area.

Freemasonry's popularity with the military contributed greatly to its spread around the globe. These lodges, depending on their warrants, often opened their doors to civilians, including locals in a given area.⁵⁶ Irish authorities adopted a system of issuing warrants. The term "warrant" dates to Irish Masonic documents from the 1720s and grants permission from the grand master or grand lodge to form a new lodge and conduct Masonic work. Around 1731, Irish Freemasons issued an actual document attesting to the fact that the lodge had permission of operate. These warrants became the visible sign that a given lodge was

⁵⁶ Jefferson S. Conover. *Freemasonry in Michigan, A Comprehensive History of Michigan Masonry From its Earliest Introduction in 1764, Compiled*. (Coldwater, MI: The Conover Engraving and Printing Company, 1897), 17. There seems to be some conjecture on this point. Records in this volume state that Military Lodges were forbidden by English Grand Lodge regulations to admit or make Masons of any but "Military man of rank" i.e. those above the rank of Private and that residents of stations and those not in the Army were excluded. While this may be true, it is impossible to say if this was strictly followed and those regiments whose warrants were issues from the Grand Lodges of Ireland or Scotland would not be bound by the Grand Lodge of England's edicts.

legitimate, and the lodge had to display their warrant in order to hold meetings. As Freemasonry spread, warrants served two purposes. First, to any who were interested, the presence of a warrant proved that a lodge was legal and considered to be regularly constituted. The second important development is that the warrants when issued, were sequentially numbered, this helped the Grand Lodges maintain records and accounts for the lodges under their charge. While this practice began in Ireland, by the mid-eighteenth century the practice was adopted by the Grand Lodges of England and Scotland and carries on to today.⁵⁷

Masonry is often thought of as an enlightenment and cosmopolitan organization, and in many regards that is true. The travelling military lodges played an extremely important role in the spreading of Freemasonry throughout the frontier. A pattern that is repeated many times is that a regiment, with its own lodge is assigned to an area. The Brethren carry out their Masonic activities, and settlers are intrigued by Masonry. When the regiment would move on, they would often leave behind a few Master Masons who would petition their Grand Lodge for a charter to be recognized and form a stationary lodge.⁵⁸ This practice occurred throughout the British colonies in North America, India and the Far East. The stationing of an Army Lodge often laid the foundation for the creation of a civilian stationary lodge. For example, in 1759, when the members of Lodge No. 74 in the 2nd Battalion of the 1st Foot, upon being ordered to depart from Albany, granted an exact copy of their Irish warrant to some influential citizens. It was

⁵⁷ Jessica L. Harland-Jacobs. *Builders of Empire, Freemasonry and British Imperialism, 1717-1927*. (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2007), 32-33.

⁵⁸ Ossian Lang. *History of Freemasonry in the State of New York*. (Washington D.C.: Westphalia Press, 2015), 49.

then changed in 1765 for a Provincial Charter, and the Lodge Mount Vernon now holds the third place on the role of the Grand Lodge of New York.⁵⁹

While the Regimental Lodges were instrumental in bringing Freemasonry to many frontier outposts, there was not a rivalry between military travelling and civilian stationary lodges or with lodges in different regiments. The ideas of enlightened brotherhood transcended military and civilian rivalries and even national conflicts in times of war. Travelling lodges took part in Masonic processions and in the laying of cornerstones throughout the British Islands as well as in its various colonial dependencies, including North America and the Far East alongside stationary lodges.⁶⁰ Another example of the welcoming nature of the Masonic Military members comes from the following advertisement, taken from the *Nova Scotia Gazette* on December 12th, 1783.

The Brethren of Lodge Unity (No. 18 Penn.) held in H.M. 17th regiment of infantry, intend holding their festival of St. John, 27th December and dining at Mrs. Dawson's tavern, near Cornwall's barracks. Any brethren who wish to dine with them will give in their names to Qr. Master Sergeant Humpage, on or before the 23rd instant, as no application can be taken after.

By order of the Master,

Dan Webb, *Secretary*.⁶¹

The Grand Lodge of Ireland was constituted and stood up in 1725 in Dublin. It was just seven years later, in 1732, when Masonic Lodge 11 was warranted to the 1st Regiment of Foot

⁵⁹ Robert Freke Gould. *Military Lodges, The Apron and the Sword*. (New Orleans: Cornerstone Book Publishers, 2014), 125. This is a reprint of the original and definitive study on the Masonic Military Lodges, first published London in 1899.

⁶⁰ Ibid., 125.

⁶¹ William Thomas, "Freemasonry in the British Army," *Journal of the Society for Army Historical Research* 14 (1935): 31.

by the Grand Lodge of Ireland. In many ways it is the Masonic Soldier and not the civilian Masonic Officer that was instrumental in the spreading of Masonry throughout the British Empire. The craft held great appeal for both British Officers and the rank and file soldiers. Sedentary clubs could not fill soldiers' needs for sociability. Deployed Regiments simply moved around too much. If we return to the 8th regiment, for example, it embarked for North America to relieve the 15th regiment in May, 1768. It proceeded to Canada and spent several years at Quebec, Montreal, and Chambly. In 1773 the regiment was ordered to Upper Canada. One detachment landed at Fort Niagara, occupying the fort on the east side of the river with the town on the west side. A part of the 8th would stay at the fort throughout the American Revolution, but detachments of the 8th occupied Carlton Island where there was a regimental Masonic Lodge by January 1783 in Oswego, Detroit, and Mackinac.⁶²

The Grand Lodge of Ireland granted the largest number of warrants to military lodges. This was due to the ancient lodges appeal to more people outside the aristocratic and elite levels of society, including the military. The Ancient Grand Lodge was formed by Irish masons, and will be discussed in Chapter Four. For the year 1813, the number of charters held by military units of various sizes granted from the three Grand Lodges are as follows: Irish, 190; English, 141 (Antients 116 Moderns 25); Scottish, 21, making a total of 352. While the records are incomplete, and lodges came into and out of existence as wars created new regiments, some of which were decommissioned after a given war, every branch of the military was represented. Of the known lodges, the majority were in the Infantry of the line, 244, followed

⁶² John Ross Robertson. *The History of Freemasonry in Canada, From its Introduction in 1749, Compiled and Written from Official Records and From Mss. Covering the Period From 1749-1858*, in the Possession of the Author, Volume 1, part 1. (Toronto: George N Morang & Co., 1900), 248.

by British and Irish militia with 68, the Cavalry, 49, then the Royal Artillery with 28. The Royal Marines had seven, the Royal Engineers had three, and the Foot Guards, one.⁶³

In addition to the number of military lodges with warrants, it is important to note that the number of lodges that were attached at different times to a particular Regiment could and did change over time. This was often due to numerous battalions in a given regiment, each with its own distinct lodge. An example of this was in the 1st Foot, which had three different warrants assigned to it in 1814. The 1st Battalion held Warrant No. 11 (Irish) of 1732, the 4th Battalion held Warrant No. 289 (Scottish) “The Royal Thistle” of 1808, both Battalions being stationed at Quebec at that time. The 2nd Battalion in India held warrant No. 574 (English) “Unity, Peace and Concord” of 1808.⁶⁴

The changing geopolitical situation in the colonies created an essentially disjointed Masonic reporting structure. One military lodge had a “Modern” Charter in 1750, Scottish in 1761, then “Ancient” in 1802, and finally “Scottish” once more in 1805. This is all the more remarkable since the lodge records show no break in its existence.⁶⁵ Military lodges were warranted by the Antient and Modern Grand Lodge of England as well as the Grand Lodges of Scotland and Ireland. In the colonies the Provincial Grand Lodges of Massachusetts, Pennsylvania, New York, and Quebec all issued warrants to form Lodges. While lodges tried to maintain their allegiance to a given nation, territory in the eighteenth century often changed

⁶³ William Thomas, “Freemasonry in the British Army,” *Journal of the Society for Army Historical Research* 14 (1935): 25.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 25.

⁶⁵ Robert Freke Gould. *The Concise History of Freemasonry*. (New York: Macoy Publishing & Masonic Supply Company, 1924), 445-446.

hands and lodges would try to receive warrants from whichever nation was sovereign. This created a confusing web of national identity overlapping masonic authority and lodge charters.

The following example serves to illustrate how convoluted the military warrant process could be. A regiment seems to have repeatedly lost its warrant, this occurred while on campaigns and on the battlefield. What is interesting is that being freemasons, having a warrant, and assembling as a lodge was important enough to these troops that they sought new warrants whenever their warrant was lost. Moreover, they choose not to break masonic law by working without a warrant. In 1771, the Grand Lodge of Scotland granted a warrant to the 17th Foot and named Thomas Hanson, a private soldier of the 17th as the first Master of the Lodge. This was unusual because generally the Colonel of a Regiment became its first Master. Regardless, the warrant was registered in the books of the Grand Lodge as No. 168; however, No. 169 was written on the document. This warrant was issued to replace a warrant, No. 136, Irish, which had been held by the 17th and lost as they reported "through the many hazardous enterprises in which they had been engaged in the Service of their King and Country." When the 17th embarked in Cork in 1775 on their journey to North America, they took warrant No. 169 with them. The warrant went missing shortly after this. A year or two before the American Revolutionary War, it was learned that Warrant No. 169 (Scottish) was in the possession of Union Lodge, No. 5 in Middleton, Delaware.

There is some conjecture as to how Union Lodge came into possession of the warrant. The story, as told by Union Lodge is that the document was found by American soldiers on the battlefield of Princeton on January 3rd, 1777. However, conflicting accounts and records held by the Grand Lodge of Nova Scotia report the warrant as having been captured at sea. A new

warrant, No. 18, from the Provincial Grand Lodge of Pennsylvania was issued and received to replace the lost warrant No. 169, Scottish. The new warrant was soon captured by the Americans but fortunately was returned to the 17th on July 23, 1779. Nothing is known about what became of warrant No. 18, Pennsylvania, after 1786 for the 17th Foot returned to England in the autumn of that year. On January 24th, 1787, the regiment received a new warrant, No. 237 from the “Antients” Grand Lodge of England. This warrant seems to have lapsed in 1792. Note that warrants could lapse or be revoked for many reasons, including: failure to pay dues or submit reports, units being mustered out of service, and during campaigns and attrition, the lodge not having enough members to meet. In 1790, the 17th embarked on board the fleet to serve as marines, and it is probable that the warrant was lost during the time the regiment was deployed in this capacity. As important as the warrants were, it seems that Regimental lodges lost them with alarming regularity, until at least after Waterloo. This brief example helps to illustrate the overlapping areas of jurisdiction with the changes in both political situations and government control over a given area at a particular moment in time. To further complicate the situation, Masonic jurisdiction did not always correlate with the political or military situation on the ground; furthermore, internal Masonic conflict, such as the battle between the ancients and the moderns, added further confusion on the frontiers.⁶⁶

While there certainly were overlapping jurisdictions, especially on the frontier, the need to have and maintain a lodge’s warrant was vital. Without that document, a lodge did not have permission to open, initiate new Masons or conduct any form of Masonic work. If a warrant

⁶⁶ William Thomas, “Freemasonry in the British Army,” *Journal of the Society for Army Historical Research* 14 (1935): 27-29.

was lost, the lodge would have to write to their Grand Lodge for a replacement, or if in a new jurisdiction, they could petition another masonic authority. There are many examples of a regiment's masonic chest being lost while in the field on a campaign. Surprisingly, they are sometimes returned by the capturing unit. An incident that occurred in the Province of Lower Canada in 1772 is an example. His majesty's 21st Regiment was intent on opening lodge but apparently had lost their warrant. The regiment asked the Grand Lodge to be allowed to open the lodge anyway, and the Grand Lodge investigated the matter and concluded, "A committee of the Grand Lodge having examined into the pretensions which a number of Masons in His Majesty's 21st Regiment have for holding a Lodge in that corps, by the title of No. 32 of the Registry of Ireland; record their opinion that until they produce a better authority than that offered, they cannot be received among us, notwithstanding their willingness to submit to our laws."⁶⁷ A lodge in those circumstances would have to write for a new warrant, petition a new Grand Lodge for a warrant or operate illegally, what would be referred to a clandestine lodge. The warrant was far more than a permission slip. Without one, a lodge could essentially lose any masonic standing.⁶⁸

With the Grand Lodge of Ireland formed in 1725, it was only a short time afterward that military lodges appeared. The first warrant given to a travelling lodge of Freemasons was

⁶⁷ Robert Freke Gould. *Military Lodges, The Apron and the Sword*. (New Orleans: Cornerstone Book Publishers, 2014), 127.

⁶⁸ The Old Charges state that a lodge is an assemblage of Masons, duly congregated, having the Holy Bible, square, and compasses, and a charter, or warrant of constitution, empowering them to work. The term charter and warrant are often used interchangeably. However, the more proper term is: Warrant of Constitution. This document has often been mistakenly called a Warrant or Charter by Brothers who were familiar with the legal qualities that form a Charter, but unable to distinguish between a Warrant or a general authorization of 1723, and Warrant or permanent documents used later. For additional explanation see: Albert G. Mackey: *Encyclopedia of Freemasonry, Comprising the Whole Range of Arts, Sciences, and Literature of the Masonic Institution, Volume 2*. (London: The Masonic History Company, 1929), 1090-1091.

assigned No. 11 and issues to the 1st Foot, then called the “Royal Regiment” and now known as the “Royal Scots”. This was done in 1732.

While Masonry began in the American colonies around 1730, the earliest period that any large numbers of regimental lodges can be identified in North America coincides with the Seven Years’ War, which was waged from 1756 to 1763. Masonic Military Regiments deployed from Britain in large numbers arriving in various cities including Boston, New York, Philadelphia and others. Many of these units would then campaign on the frontier establishing garrisons that had lodges wherever they went. This diffusion during the Seven Years’ War would prove crucial to the later establishment of merchants and traders, Brothers all, who would use their fraternal connections in the establishment of long distance trade networks.

In looking at Regimental deployments, On October 1st, 1768 the 14th, 29th, and a part of the 59th Regiments arrived at Boston, and shortly thereafter, the 64th and 65th Foot landed, directly from Ireland. Within these regiments, there were three lodges all working under the ancient system. Two lodges were chartered by Ireland and one from the Grand Lodge of England. They were No. 58 with the 14th Foot, No. 322 with the 29th, and No. 106 with the 64th (from England). The arrival of these regiments seems to have caused a fair amount of excitement, and Boston Masons wasted little time in establishing Masonic relationships with the newly arrived Brothers.⁶⁹

Regiments and their attendant lodges were deployed throughout New England and took part in various campaigns. Travelling Lodges could be established on an ad hoc basis. This

⁶⁹ Robert Freke Gould. *Military Lodges, The Apron and the Sword*. (New Orleans: Cornerstone Book Publishers, 2014), 42.

occurred in 1759 prior to units departing on a campaign into the Lake George region of New York and likely into Canada. Jeremy Gridley, Grand Master of Masons in Massachusetts, sent the following greetings and instructions on April 13th, 1759:

Know Ye that We By Virtue of the Authroity Committed to us By the Right Honorable & Right Worshipful James Brydges, Marquis of Carnarvan Grand Master of Masons, do hereby nominate appoint & authorize Our Right Worshipful and well beloved Brother Abraham Savage to Congregate all Free and Accepted Masons in the Present Expedition intended against Canada at Lake George or else where in our district into one or more Lodges as he shall think fitt, and to appoint Wardens and all other Officers to a Lodge appertaining, and we do hereby give Such Lodge and Lodges all the Priviledges and authority of Stated Lodges, and enjoin them to Conform themselves to the Constitutions and ancient Customs of Masonry and to transmit the Names of all Persons that shall be made masons in any of them, and Four dollars for every one so made to our Grand Secretary at Boston for the use and Relief of indigent Brothers...⁷⁰

In this example travelling lodges are forming along with military units that are deploying during a campaign during the Seven Years War. It is interesting to note that the instructions provide for the making of Masons along the way. This means that the traveling lodge, even one formed for the campaigning season, expected to conduct the degree ceremonies and initiate new brothers they would bring their Masonic jewels and accoutrements to do the Degree work. No mention is made of only initiating military members, so it is possible that civilians may have been made Masons, thus sowing the seeds for the creation of civilian sedentary lodges in the future. These instructions do not mention an end date, so it is possible that so long as the “present expedition” is taking place, the warrant is valid that new masons might seek warrants

⁷⁰ Freemasons, Grand Lodge of Massachusetts. *Proceedings in Masonry, St. John's Grand Lodge, 1733-1792; Massachusetts Grand Lodge, 1769-1792. With an Appendix, Containing Copies of Many Ancient Documents and a Table of Lodges.* (Boston: Grand Lodge of Massachusetts, 1895), 63.

for permanent lodges later “in our district.” Furthermore, it was clearly expected that there would be a private place for the lodge to meet and conduct Masonic business.

Abraham Savage seems to have taken his charge to heart. Reports from August 4th, 1759 discuss how General Amherst took possession of Crown Point without a battle as General Bourlamaque, upon Amherst’s approach retreated to the Fort at Isle aux Noix, on an Island in the River Richelieu. At a meeting of a Lodge held shortly after the French abandoned Crown Point, “Twelve officers of the 1st Regiment of Foot were made Masons, Right Worshipful Abraham Savage presiding as Master.”⁷¹

The siege of Quebec and fall of Montreal provides perhaps the best documentation for military lodges during the Seven Years War; in addition, these actions that established a permanent presence of Freemasons and lodges in the Province of Quebec and Canada. The availability of records is likely due to the large numbers of troops involved, and the nature of a siege creates a stationary action where records are likely better kept and preserved than field units a foot on active campaigns. The Battle of Quebec was fought on September 13th, 1759 and was a key battle in the North American theater of operations during the Seven Year’s War. The Battle was the culmination of a siege that had lasted three months. The battle put British troops commanded by General James Wolfe, along with the Royal Navy against French troops and Canadian militia under the command of General Louis-Joseph, Marquis de Montcalm. Of note, General Wolfe was a Freemason, and it has been speculated that the Marquis de Montcalm was a member of Minden Military Lodge, but that has not been proven. The battle had fewer than 10,000 troops engaged but had a substantial Masonic presence.

⁷¹ John Graham. *Outlines of the History of Freemasonry in the Province of Quebec*. (Montreal: John Lovell & Son, 1892), 34-35.

The Lodges of Freemasons attached to Regiments during the siege of Quebec were:

- 15th Regiment, No. 245, I.R., warranted in 1754.
- 28th Regiment, No. 35, I.R., warranted 1734.
- 28th Regiment, "Louisbourg," Boston "Modern," warranted 1758.
- 35th Regiment, No. 205, I.R., warranted 1749.
- 40th Regiment, No. 42, E.R. "Ancient," warranted 1755.
- 47th Regiment, No. 192, I.R., warranted 1748.
- 48th Regiment, No. 218, I.R., warranted 1750.

After the siege, the lodges came together to celebrate the feast of Saint John, one of the patron saints of Masonry, on December 27th, 1759. Without a doubt other Freemasons from the city and the army attended this ceremony. Mention is made to the brethren of these lodges "and perchance others" along with "leading Freemasons among the many gallant Commanders of other officers if the French Army." In addition to the celebration, a great deal of business was attended to regarding the future of Freemasonry in Canada. Capt. John Knox in his book, *Campaigns in North America, 1769*, recalls that the celebration was attended by "the several Lodges of Freemasons in the Garrison."⁷² Notable Brothers in attendance were the Honorable Simon Fraser, Colonial of the 78th Highlanders, who would become the Provincial Grand Master the following year, Brother John Young, Colonial of the 60th Regiment of Foot (Royal Americans), who was also the Provincial Grand Master for North American and the West Indies, and Brother Huntingford, Colonial of the 28th Regiment and Master of the Louisbourg Lodge.⁷³

⁷² John Graham. *Outlines of the History of Freemasonry in the Province of Quebec*. (Montreal: John Lovell & Son, 1892), 36-37.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, 36-37.

Montreal would surrender the following year, on September 9th, 1760. Several military lodges were amongst the British and colonial regiments at the capitulation. They included:

- 1st Regiment, No. 74 I.R., warranted 1737.
- 17th Regiment, No. 136, I.R., warranted 1748.
- 27th Regiment, No. 24, I.R., warranted 1734.
- 40th Regiment, No. 42, E.R., "Ancients," warranted 1755.
- 42nd Regiment, No. 195, I.R., warranted 1749.
- 46th Regiment, No. 227, I.R., warranted 1752.
- 55th Regiment, No ----, S. R., warranted 1743.

In addition, there were likely lodges from Lake George and Crown Point present as well. This suggests that there were at least 14 Regimental Lodges active with British and Colonial troops at the taking of Quebec and Montreal in 1759-1760. When discussing how military lodges laid the groundwork for the spread of Masonry an example of this is Lodge No. 227, I.R., in the 46th Regiment of Foot, which becomes the "Lodge of Antiquity," in Montreal and No. 1 on the registry of the Grand Lodge of the Province of Quebec.⁷⁴

After the fall of the two cities, British Freemasons set about organizing the newly acquired territory. According to a letter written by Brother John Gawler, dated Feb 9th, 1769, "In the winter of the year 1759, when conquest had added that capital to His Majesty's dominions, the Masters and Wardens of all the Warranted Lodges held in the Regiments garrisoned there (to the number of eight or nine) assembled together and unanimously agreed to choose an acting Grand Master." In addition the Lodges had been conducting charitable collections to given to the poor widows and orphans of the army and distressed Canadians, which "brought the craft into such universal esteem that numbers applied to the different

⁷⁴ Ibid., 37.

lodges and was made Masons.”⁷⁵ In 1760 these lodges opened their doors to civilians who would form their own lodges after the Regiments.

Some soldiers and would stay in Quebec after the battle and after their term of service to the crown ended. These Freemasons would help spread masonry to the civilian population and open businesses, becoming community leaders and helping to establish Masonic networks throughout Canada. An example of such a person was Miles Prenties. Miles upon leaving the service achieved every soldier's dream. He became a tavern-keeper, opening the Sun Tavern at Quebec. His tavern was a popular meeting place for Freemasons. An advertisement in the Quebec Gazette on June 21st 1764 states:

Notice is Hereby Given, That on Sunday the 24th, being the Festival of St. John, such strange BRETHREN, who may have a desire of joining the Merchant's Lodge No. 1, Quebec, may obtain liberty by applying to Miles Prenties at the Sun, in St. John street, who has Tickets, Price Five Shillings for the Day⁷⁶

In 1775, Miles purchased the celebrated Freemasons Hall Tavern where the Grand Lodge and local lodges held meetings and feasts. Later upon the departure of the 43rd Regiment, Miles helped form a civilian lodge and served as its Master in 1766. As an interesting aside, Le Moine and other sources discuss the captivation at Quebec by the gallant “Captain of the Albemarle” the future “Hero of the Nile” Horatio Nelson, who would be made a Mason on August 15th 1787 at Amphibious Lodge No. 407, in Plymouth. This was a Lodge for Royal Navy

⁷⁵ Henry Sadler. *Thomas Dunckerley, his Life, Labors, and Letters, Including Some Masonic and Naval Memorials of the 18th Century*. (London: Diprose Bateman and Co., Printers, 1891), 51-52.

⁷⁶ John Graham. *Outlines of the History of Freemasonry in the Province of Quebec*. (Montreal: John Lovell & Son, 1892), 42. For additional information regarding Miles Prenties (Prentice), see *Freemasonry at the Siege of Quebec, 1759-60*, by A.J.B. Milbone: <http://www.linshaw.ca/v12/omtp/vol02no09.p>

officers and marines. Apparently Horatio Nelson was quite taken by the beautiful niece of Miles Prenties. Interesting to think how things may have changed had he stayed in Quebec.

Thomas Dunckerley was a Mason at the Battle of Quebec but was not in a Regimental Lodge. He was a gunner aboard the His Majesty's warship the Vanguard at Quebec.⁷⁷ It seems that Dunckerley distinguished himself for his actions during this siege because Admiral Boscawen took notice of Dunckerley and reported that he "behaved so well." In addition, the admiral must have thought highly of him because he granted Dunckerley a warrant as a teacher of mathematics onboard the Vanguard.⁷⁸ Mariners in the 18th century had to have a strong command of math, especially for crucial tasks such as navigation. Shortly after the siege, the Vanguard was ordered to return to London. While in London, he likely attended the Grand Lodge quarterly communication held at the Crown and Anchor on January 14th, 1760. At this meeting he likely had a meeting with the Grand Secretary because just two days later he was presented with a warrant for a lodge to be held on His Majesty's ship, Vanguard, with him as Master. This was Naval Lodge No. 254 "Moderns." This is the first known lodge warranted for a ship. In addition, Dunckerley was also given the authority to regulate Masonic affairs in the newly conquered Canadian provinces or in any other part of the globe as he may visit where no

⁷⁷ Some writers have mentioned Dunckerley as a "mere gunner" however, that would be a misleading statement, giving a false impression. A gunner in the Royal Navy is a warrant officer, which means that they are tested and are considered experts in their respective area, in this case naval gunnery. In addition, Dunckerley would also have to be educated, have knowledge of seamanship as well as naval ordinance and accounting for ammunition and stores. The duties for gunner in the Admiralty Regulations at this time fill eight full pages. It was a position of considerable responsibility. For a comprehensive study of the British Navy at this time, see N.A.M. Rodger, *The Command of the Ocean, A Naval History of Britain, 1649-1815*.

⁷⁸ Henry Sadler. *Thomas Dunckerley, his Life, Labors, and Letters, Including Some Masonic and Naval Memorials of the 18th Century*. (London: Diprose Bateman and Co., Printers, 1891), 43.

Provincial Grand Master currently presided.⁷⁹ While there are no records of Dunckerley attending the meeting, given that he was an active mason, it is unlikely that he would have skipped it. In England, Warrants of Constitution come from the Grand Master; so it is probable that his warrants are a result of the Grand Lodge meeting that had recently taken place. This warrant was granted by the Grand Lodge of England “Moderns” and showed great trust and confidence in Dunckerley. It must be added that a warship would travel throughout the empire, and having someone on board with a warrant such as Dunckerley’s would allow for reporting back to the Grand Lodge as well as the creation and spread of “Modern” masonry. In this case, the Grand Lodge was correct.

The Vanguard sailed back to Quebec, arriving just in time to help prevent the city from being retaken by the French. On June 24th, 1760, Saint John’s day, Colonial Sir Simon Fraser of the 78th Foot was elected to preside over the Canadian Lodges, and Brother Dunckerley with his Grand Lodge warrant honored and installed Colonial Fraser to his office. A short time later, the Vanguard sailed for the West Indies, and Dunckerley was transferred to the Prince, a larger ship, considered to be a second rate and thus in many ways a promotion for Dunckerley. Shortly after this, the Prince was warranted Lodge No. 279 “Moderns.”⁸⁰ The final known ship lodge would be the Canceaux, warranted by the Provincial Grand Lodge of Quebec in 1768 and numbered 5 in the Quebec Registry and No. 224, F.R. “Moderns” by the Grand Lodge. While ship lodges were rare, they did help spread Masonry. In the province of Quebec, all the warranted lodges through 1791, and some afterward, were warranted by the “Modern” Grand

⁷⁹ Ibid., 65.

⁸⁰ Robert Freke Gould. *Military Lodges, The Apron and the Sword*. (New Orleans: Cornerstone Book Publishers, 2014), 135-136.

Lodge of England, by a charter granted to Dunckerley, who came to Quebec on the Vanguard as a gunner and Master of the ships lodge.⁸¹

These actions by the early military lodges in the Province of Quebec resulted in the rapid spread of Freemasonry. From the years 1759-1791, 37 Lodges were warranted. Is it entirely possible that there were more whose records do not survive, but even this number is substantial. Moreover, these lodges were geographically dispersed to locations as far away from Quebec as Detroit, Michilimackinac, Lake George, Lake Champlain, and Vermont. There were lodges in Sorel, Ogdensburg, Cataraqui, and a Lodge known as “between the lakes” (Ontario and Erie).⁸² This activity shows a progressive westward movement of lodges into the interior and Great Lakes region. This foundation of lodges, which attracted businessmen, merchants, politicians, ship captains, etc., established an early trade network reaching back across the Atlantic.

The Seven Years War brought many travelling lodges to North America, these Regiments as they moved throughout the frontier laid the cornerstone for later sedentary lodges to form by permanently stationed garrisons as well as civilians who had been initiated into Freemasonry by ambulatory lodges and upon the departure of the Regiment, petitioned a Grand Lodge for their own charter to conduct Masonic work. The Great Lakes region because of shifting

⁸¹ Henry Sadler. *Thomas Dunckerley, his Life, Labors, and Letters, Including Some Masonic and Naval Memorials of the 18th Century*. (London: Diprose Bateman and Co., Printers, 1891), 67-68. Sadler in writing about ships lodges notes how little we know of them beyond the warrants being issued. While there were sea captain lodges in port towns, there were only a few lodges on ships themselves. It is not know where on the ship they would have meet, at what times, on what days, or how they were summoned. Life on a ship was a 24 hour a day affair and very different from army camp life. Space and privacy being a premium on a ship, it is hard to imagine keeping meetings secret and having space for degree ceremonies.

⁸² John Graham. *Outlines of the History of Freemasonry in the Province of Quebec*. (Montreal: John Lovell & Son, 1892), 35.

political control were a mix of overlapping Masonic Charters issued by Grand Lodges in England, Ireland, Scotland, as well as Colonial, and later state Grand Lodges of New York, Massachusetts, and Pennsylvania. It is possible that the waterways and international aspects of trade and governing powers in this region engendered a multinational approach to how lodges were chartered, who was admitted, and how trade was conducted, often in opposition to the law.⁸³ Lodges would not sort themselves out into jurisdictions until after the Revolutionary War. At that point sovereign boundaries began to stabilize and states in the new United States of America began to constitute their respective Grand Lodges. Lastly, there are many examples of masons from lodges requesting a new warrant as it fell under the control of different nations. While masonry is a supranational organization, masons themselves worked to maintain positive relations with their nations and grand lodges.

As masonry spread across the frontier, British and Canadian Lodges of Freemasons continued to exist in Michigan and New York until 1796. The Provincial Grand Lodge of the “Moderns” in Quebec established a Lodge at Vergennes, Vermont on May 5th, 1791. The Grand Lodge of the “Ancients” at Quebec under the (Provincial) Grand Mastership of Prince Edwards, after 1799, Duke of Kent, granted a warrant to establish a Lodge at the city of Detroit, Michigan, in 1794. At the time, Detroit was part of Canada and was not ceded to the United States by

⁸³ A study on early trade in Lower Michigan is: *Frontier Seaport, Detroit's Transformation into an Atlantic Entrepôt* by Catherine Cangany. Cangany discusses trade, laws and how the residents often ignored the laws to continue trading across the Detroit River once borders had been established. Many of the prominent traders in this region were Masons. While Cangany examines Detroit and its distinct character as a frontier port and international border, she does not examine what role fraternal organizations or the military might have played in establishing trade connections and creating a cosmopolitan seaport on the frontier.

Jay's Treaty until 1796.⁸⁴ Detroit provides a perfect example of overlapping Masonic authorities. While Detroit was given a charter in 1794 from the Grand Lodge of Canada, there had been a lodge there for over thirty years with a warrant from the Provincial Grand Lodge of New York dated, April 27, 1764.⁸⁵ Unfortunately, beyond the warrant, records for this lodge have not survived.

In 1701 Detroit was founded by Antoine de la Mothe Cadillac, under the government of France. It remained under French rule for 59 years. In 1760, English troops took possession of Detroit after having captured Canada. Major Robert Rogers of the famous Rogers Rangers, records in his journal, "I dispatched Capt. Brewer by land to Detroit, with a drove of forty oxen." His order of march from Presque Isle was as follows: "The boats to row two deep; first, Major Rogers's boat, abreast of him Capt. Croghan; Capt. Campbell follows with his company, the Rangers next...."⁸⁶ Major Rogers took command of Detroit in 1760. Later his journal indicates that he left Captain Campbell in command along with his company.⁸⁷ Robert Rogers was made a Freemason at St. John's Lodge No. 1 in Portsmouth, New Hampshire. Records indicate that

⁸⁴ John H. Graham. *Outlines of the History of Freemasonry in the Province of Quebec*. (Montreal: John Lovell & Son, 1892), 28. This book, like others frequently referenced in this study is a compilation of primary source material covering lodge minutes, biographical data on Grand Lodge officers and other preeminent Freemasons as well as some of their business dealings.

⁸⁵ Jefferson S. Conover. *Freemasonry in Michigan A Comprehensive History of Michigan Masonry From Its Earliest Introduction in 1764, Compiled*. (Coldwater, Michigan: The Conover Engraving and Printing Company, 1897), 14-15. Unfortunately, other than the record of the warrant being issued from New York, little of the early lodge in Detroit survives.

⁸⁶ Franklin B. Hough. *The Journals of Major Robert Rogers Containing An Account of the Several Excursions He Made Under the Generals Who Commanded Upon the Continent of North America During The Late War*. (Albany: New York, Joel Munsell's Sons, 1883), 185.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 197.

Rogers along with a cadre of the 60th Regiment (The Royal American Regiment of Foot) helped establish the first Masonic Lodge in Detroit.⁸⁸

According to Captain Donald Campbell,⁸⁹ a large portion of the 60th that garrisoned Detroit was gentlemen from New York and other eastern colonies. Some of these officers mentioned being Masons and they, with others residing there desiring to be able to meet as Masons, petitioned the Provincial Grand Master, George Harrison of New York, for a warrant to open in Detroit a Lodge of Master Masons. The request was granted and a warrant was issued on April 27th, 1764. The Charter reads as follows:

TO ALL AND EVERY OUR WORSHIPFUL AND LOVING BRETHREN:

Wee, GEORGE HARISON, Esq., Provincial Grand Master of the Most Ancient and Honorable Society of Free and Accepted Masons in the Province of New York in America send Greeting:

KNOW YE, that, reposing special Trust and Confidence in our Worshipful and well-beloved Brother Lieu JOHN CHRISTIE, of the 60th Regiment, Wee do hereby nominate, constitute and appoint him, the said John Christie, to be Master of a Lodge of Masons, Number one, to be held at Detroit under whatever name the said Master and his officers shall please to distinguish it; and Wee do also appoint Sampson Fleming, Senior Warden, and Josias Harper Junr Warden of the said Lodge by Virtue of the Power and Authority vested in me by a deputation bearing date in London the ninth day of June, A.D., One Thousand Seven Hundred and fifty-three, A. L. Five Thousand Seven Hundred and fifty-three, from the Right Worshipful John Proby, Baron of Carysford, in the county of Wicklow, in the Kingdom of Ireland, the then Grand Master of England, Appointing is Provincial Grand Master of New York, And Wee do hereby authorize the said JOHN CHRISTIE to make Masons as also to do and execute all things Lawful in Masonry, he taking especial care that the Members of his said Lodge do Observe and keep the Rules, Orders Regulations and Instructions contained in our constitutions and their own By-Laws, together with all such other Rules, Orders, Regulations and Instructions as shall be given is, and paying out of the first money he shall receive for Initiation Fees to me at

⁸⁸ Gary L. Heinmiller. *Loyalist Freemasons from the State of New York*. (2010), 105. This is an unpublished paper that was compiled by the Director of the Onondaga & Oswego Districts Historical Societies.

⁸⁹ Of note, records indicate that Donald Campbell was a Freemason and a member of Union Lodge No.1 which was located in Albany, New York. For additional information, see: *A standard History of Freemasonry in the State of New York, Including Lodge, Chapter, Council, Commandery and the Scottish Rite Bodies, Vol 1*. (pp. 35-38).

New York, Three pounds three shilling Sterling by one applied to the use of the Grand Charity here or Elsewhere.

Given under our Hand and Seal of Masonry at New York this L. S. Twenty-seventh day of April, A.D. One Thousand Seven Hundred and sixty-four, and in the year of Masonry Five Thousand Seven Hundred and Sixty-four.

Witness, PETER MIDDLETON
No. 448 of the Register of England and No. 1 of Detroit.⁹⁰

Masonry having only been on the North American continent for a little more than 30 years, we see a Lodge being established deep into the frontier in Detroit. Michigan at this time was unknown and unbroken wilderness. Detroit was little more than a frontier outpost and trading port. Military Regiments were responsible for bringing Masonry to Detroit. As the military presence expanded and the fur trade grew, trading posts, military garrisons, and Masonic Lodges continued to move in lockstep throughout the region.

It is interesting to note that while military officers who were Masons petitioned the Provincial Grand Lodge of New York for a charter to perform Masonic work, Detroit's first lodge appears to be a bit of a hybrid. It does not appear to be a travelling lodge as the warrant was not assigned to the 60th. Also, while it was common for the commanding officer of a unit to be made the first Master of a Lodge and Lieutenant John Christie of the 60th was indeed made Master, the other officers are designated only by name. No implication is made that they were soldiers, and records are not available to determine this. It does appear that the Lodge was formed as more of a Regular Lodge to remain in Detroit and had as its first members a mix of

⁹⁰ Jefferson S. Conover. *Freemasonry in Michigan A Comprehensive History of Michigan Masonry From Its Earliest Introduction in 1764, Compiled*. (Coldwater, Michigan: The Conover Engraving and Printing Company, 1897), 14-15.

soldiers and civilians. The best indication that this was indeed the case is that the lodge remained in Detroit long after the 60th moved on.

From Detroit, Freemasonry made its way north along the expanding system of forts and fur trading routes. At the conclusion of the Seven Years War, Great Britain acquired vast new lands in North America. Most of this land was unexplored and uncharted by Europeans. To guard against future French and Native American incursions, the British built a chain of garrisons throughout Canada and what would become the Michigan territory. The northernmost post on the Great Lakes was Fort Michilimackinac. This fort for a time was the western edge of the British Atlantic World. Parts of the 60th were stationed at the Fort along with Robert Rogers in 1766. Given that, it is likely that they continued to be active masons as they had in Detroit. Their activities may have laid the groundwork for a chartered lodge. Saint John's Lodge, No. 15 at Michilimackinac was warranted by the Provincial Grand Lodge of Quebec in 1782.⁹¹

Fort Michilimackinac was at a strategic crossroads. It served as a center for the complex international and cross cultural fur trading industry. This industry had French-Canadian, British, Scottish, French, and Native American traders from numerous nations, all converging in this location to conduct business. Native American traders came from as far away as northern Lake Superior, west across the Mississippi River and south into the Illinois Country, passing through Lake Michigan to get there. Add to this mix a few freed and enslaved Blacks, some sophisticated British Officers and a garrison to manage it and try to maintain some order and

⁹¹ John Ross Robertson. *The History of Freemasonry in Canada, From Its Introduction in 1749, Compiled and Written From Official Records and From Mss. Covering the Period From 1749-1858, in the Possession of the Author, Volume 1, Part 1.* (Toronto: George N. Morang & Company Limited, 1900). 181.

you have a true “melting pot” long before the term came into use. The fort was the center of a vast network and lakes and rivers and at the juncture of Lakes Michigan and Huron.⁹²

Many traders, military officers, politicians and leaders were Freemasons. As outposts grew and more people settled into an area, it was logical that Masonry would expand as well. At Fort Mackinaw, now located on Mackinaw Island, settlement continued to expand. In 1782, reporting indicates that many local merchants and residents longed for a priest. The last priest, Father Gibault, previously visited the area seven years before. Not being able to receive the sacraments was extremely troubling to many. At the same time, others were forming plans to build a Masonic Lodge. David Mitchel, George Meldrum, Benjamin Lyon, and John Coates had been meeting with Lieutenants Clowes, Brooke and other officers to discuss plans for what would become Saint John’s Lodge, No. 15. It was well known that many prominent people coming to the island were Masons. One of the first, and perhaps most famous was the above mentioned Major Robert Rogers.⁹³

While the initial charter for Detroit came via the 60th Regiment, the lodges in the Great Lakes region petitioned for new charters as spheres of political control changed. In 1794, warrants were issued by the Provincial Grand Lodge of the Ancients at Quebec to Zion lodge in Detroit, amongst others. At this time, all the lodges formed by Lower Canada passed between 1792 and 1800 to fall under the authority of the Provincial Grand Lodge of Upper Canada. This includes not less than six lodges warranted by the Quebec authority that were west of Ottawa. This split allowed for better administration of the lodges in their respective territories. In

⁹² David A. Armour and Keith R. Widder. *At the Crossroads, Michilimackinac During the American Revolution*. (Lansing, Michigan: Mackinac State Historic Parks, John Henry Co., 1986), 3.

⁹³ Ibid., 179.

addition, upper and lower Canada was culturally different, with English and French settler concentrations. Of note, this included the lodge at Michilimackinac, which was “a beehive of Craft work.”⁹⁴

Masons travelled to these outposts to conduct business and that, whenever possible, they would seek out Brothers with whom to conduct business. Fortunately, some lodges required Brothers who missed a meeting to present a valid excuse or face a fine. These records would show those in attendance and those absent. Masonic tradition also calls for two feasts to be held every year, on the 24th of June and the 27th of December. These are held in honor of the two patron saints of Masonry, that being Saint John the Baptist and Saint John the Evangelist respectively. At such a celebration on June 24, 1795, the records show that: “During the time of Mirth, Brother Curry arrived from Mackinaw in the Detroit Sloop, and spent the remainder of the Evening with us.”⁹⁵

Business dealings could also keep Brothers from moving up in a lodge, also known as advancing through the chairs. In June, 1802, records state that: “Brother Robert Abbott being elected Master, 7th inst., for the ensuing six months, but his business calling him to the Indian Country and consequently not present to be installed, the present Master to be continued pro tempore.”⁹⁶ It seems likely that business dealings in the Indian Country would take the Brother

⁹⁴ John Ross Robertson. *The History of Freemasonry in Canada, From Its Introduction in 1749, Compiled and Written From Official Records and From Mss. Covering the Period From 1749-1858, in the Possession of the Author, Volume 1, Part 1.* (Toronto: George N. Morang & Company Limited, 1900). 177.

⁹⁵ Jefferson S. Conover. *Freemasonry in Michigan A Comprehensive History of Michigan Masonry From Its Earliest Introduction in 1764, Compiled.* (Coldwater, Michigan: The Conover Engraving and Printing Company, 1897), 21.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 25.

north, perhaps to Mackinaw to visit a lodge on the island and conduct business with other Masons at the fort.

As previously mentioned, the fur trade extended as far south as the Mississippi River. The first traders from territories such as Minnesota, Wisconsin, and Illinois were various Native American tribes that hunted and trapped deer, beaver, fox etc. These traders would then load their furs onto bateau and other large trading canoes to make the journey to places like Fort Mackinaw. Over time, European traders and settlers moved into these areas and established trading outposts, forts, and settlements. The following chapter will examine freemasons who were involved with this trade.

One of the first known Freemasons to come to the Illinois country was George Rogers Clark. He was born in Virginia in 1752 and spent his early years on a farm just a few miles from Thomas Jefferson's Monticello. His early military career was spent in Kentucky, then part of Virginia, where he earned his reputation as an Indian fighter. He was a hero of the American Revolution for his capturing of the British Forts of Kaskaskia (1778), and Vincennes (1779). These victories weakened British influence in the Northwest Territory, which was ceded to the United States in the Treaty of Paris in 1783. Clark was a Mason, but records do not exist as to when and where he was made a Mason. It is possible that he was a member of a military travelling lodge as many of their records have vanished over the years. Regardless, it is highly probable that Clark was a Mason because Abraham Lodge #8 performed a Masonic funeral for him in 1818.

It was at Kaskaskia that a group of Freemasons took the first steps to establish a formal lodge in Illinois. On March 9th, 1805, seven Kaskaskia residents petitioned the Grand Lodge of

Pennsylvania for a charter to establish a lodge and conduct Masonic work. Seven Brothers signed the petition. These men, all Masons, came from widely dispersed lodges: one from Philadelphia, one from Pittsburgh, two from Stanton, one from New York, one from Chambersburg and one from Quebec.⁹⁷ While not a military lodge, Kaskaskia, situated on the Mississippi River was a fur trading post when occupied by the French. While not exclusively a military outpost, the area was seized by a Mason and military officer. Moreover, it demonstrates how Masons could come together from different areas, but be “Brothers” due to their shared experiences. In looking at Kaskaskia and its fur trading activities, one of the founding Brothers is of particular interest.

William Arundel was born in Ireland, where he received a liberal education. He arrived in Cahokia around 1783 and was an Indian trader and fur buyer. He later settled down in Kaskaskia. He served as a justice of the peace and was one of three judges who held the first county court in Kaskaskia. He became a Mason in St. Andrew’s Lodge, Number 2, Quebec and later served as Master of Union Lodge of Detroit.⁹⁸ William Arundel is indicative of many Freemasons; he clearly had Masonic connections that reached as far as Quebec and Detroit. His business dealings, fur trading activities and connections could have reached throughout the Great Lakes region and potentially as far away as Ireland.

⁹⁷ Alphonse Cerza, “Freemasonry Comes to Illinois,” *Journal of the Illinois State Historical Society* (1908-1984) 16 (1968): 183.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 185.



Figure 3; Great Lakes Fur Trade Routes, 17th – 19th centuries. These routes help to illustrate the vast geographical range covered by these networks. While some arrows only depict things moving in one direction, clearly this was not the case. Goods travelled to and from centers for trade, often regardless of political circumstances.⁹⁹

Looking beyond the Great Lakes region, military lodges were often the first Masons in an area and were responsible for laying the cornerstone for future lodges to grow in a region. This would certainly prove useful as trade networks expanded. For example, Lodge No. 74 (Irish) travelled extensively, serving in no fewer than ten countries in Europe, Asia Minor, North Africa and North America, as well as numerous Islands in the Caribbean and the Mediterranean Seas. When the lodge re-deployed from Albany, New York, it had the (unauthorized) custom of giving civilian Masons a copy of the warrant, thus “allowing them to set and act during our

⁹⁹ The Last Diadoch. <https://thelastdiadoch.tumblr.com/post/144566309305/the-council-of> (Accessed April 10th 2020).

absence, of until they, by our assistance, can procure a separate Warrant for themselves from the Grand Lodge of Ireland.”¹⁰⁰ In this case the lodge started to work as soon as the unit left and in due time received their own proper Warrant. In addition, a lodge in the 39th Foot claims to have made the first Mason in India and subsequently was responsible for the establishment of several lodges throughout India.¹⁰¹

The Seven Years War ushered in the military lodges in North America and markedly contributed to the spread of Masonry in the Great Lakes region, as well as other areas. Just as during the Seven Years War, during the Revolutionary War sedentary lodges could not meet the needs of many Masons, now serving in the Continental Army. Military life and campaigns simply involved far too much movement. To address these challenges, American Grand Lodges warranted ten military lodges during the Revolutionary War. These were the first of their type created by American Grand Lodges. Seven of these ambulatory lodges held warrants from Pennsylvania, three of which were for Pennsylvanian troops and one each for units in North Carolina, Maryland, Delaware and New Jersey. New York warranted one and the two existing Grand Lodges of Massachusetts; each organized and warranted a unit.¹⁰²

During the Revolution, military lodges were not copying warrants and establishing lodges in remote areas such as occurred more frequently during the French and Indian War. Many of the men in these lodges were already Masons and had been displaced from their

¹⁰⁰ William Thomas, “Freemasonry in the British Army,” *Journal of the Society for Army Historical Research* 14 (1935): 29-30.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, 30.

¹⁰² Steven C. Bullock. *Revolutionary Brotherhood, Freemasonry and the Transformation of the American Social Order, 1730-1840*. (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996), 128. For Additional information about the military lodges during the Revolution, see Jacob Hugo Tatsch, *Freemasonry in the Thirteen Colonies* (New York, 1933).

“mother lodge” when they joined the army. Of course many soldiers joined and became Masons while serving in the military. Masonry at that time served as a shared and unifying experience that transcended individual colonies, nationalities and even European and Native American lines. Universal Brotherhood and the shared initiation rituals served to create a bond, which united Brothers regardless of race or religion. This was more important on the frontier or while fighting in military campaigns, where cultural norms and aspects of “civilized society” were reduced or non-existent. These enlightenment ideas have always been a factor in Freemasonry; all Masons are Brothers, these ties and trust served to cement business and trade relations after the wars.

An example of Masonic Brotherhood transcending national boundaries of friend and foe occurred during the Revolutionary War. This incident involved the 17th Foot, a British Regiment. In a skirmish with the Americans, the “constitution” and lodge regalia was seized and fell into the hand of the American Commander, General Samuel H. Parsons, a member of American Union Lodge. General Parsons quickly returned the items with the following note:

West Jersey Highlands,
23rd July, 1779.

Brethren, -- When the ambition of monarchs, or the jarring interests of contending States, call forth their subjects to war, as Masons we are disarmed of that resentment which stimulates to undistinguished desolation, and however our political sentiments may impel us in the public dispute, we are still Brethren, and (our professional duty apart) ought to promote the happiness and advance the weal of each other.

Accept, therefore, at the hands of a Brother, the Constitution and the Lodge Unity, No. 18, held in the 17th British regiment, which your late misfortunes have put it in my power to restore to you.

I am, your Brother and obedient Servant, Samuel H. Parsons¹⁰³

¹⁰³ Robert Freke Gould. *Military Lodges, The Apron and the Sword*. (New Orleans: Cornerstone Book Publishers, 2014), 141

The above letter symbolizes the bonds of Brotherhood that existed among Masons, even on opposing sides of war. Freemasonry could transcend national boundaries, which would prove useful as military officers returned to civilian occupations after the war. Moreover, the unifying nature of the fraternity made Brothers of all who joined, regardless of region, religion and social status. The degrees of masonry provided a powerful experience that drew together men who might never have met.

Masonry helped to build ties among the officer corps when other more common denominators were not possible. Geographic displacement was a considerable factor. Units might have officers from several areas, making a shared experience difficult. Forms of worship, were often very similar in a given town or region and would serve as a unifying factor. In the army, the chaplain corps was understaffed and focused its attention on the rank and file troops and not the needs of the officers. In addition, the diversity of religious practices and denominations could cause further mistrust and dissention in a unit rather than serving to join people together. Camp religious practices could easily become a divisive problem in a given Regiment. Masonry, as previously discussed, adopted a religious stance that allowed for various forms of spiritualism, without becoming dogmatic. Thus, Masonic military officers would potentially be better able to overlook different religious beliefs of other officers. For example, both the orthodox Congregationalist stalwart Timothy Dwight and the Universalist pioneer John Murray held chaplain's appointments under officers who were Masonic Brothers.¹⁰⁴

¹⁰⁴ Steven C. Bullock. *Revolutionary Brotherhood, Freemasonry and the Transformation of the American Social Order, 1730-1840*. (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996), 128.

With the Seven Years War a recent memory, many officers in the Continental army were well aware and remembered how social status could have a bearing on appointments and promotions. George Washington for years endeavored to receive a commission in the British army, with no success. Washington a colonial officer regardless of rank was inferior to British regular officers. While being a mason might help in some cases, Washington was a member of Fredericksburg Lodge No. 4, which received its warrant from the Grand Lodge of Scotland. As will be seen in chapter four, rivalries existed among Grand Lodges. The Premier Grand Lodge of England, known as the moderns recruited from the elite of society, such as senior British aristocratic officers. Membership under the Scottish Grand Lodge may not have carried as much weight. As the Continental army took shape, many officers must have felt their lack of social standing, family name, religion or even place of origin could work against them in the officer corps. Freemasonry and its ideas of honor, brotherhood and equality could work to ease some of the societal and military anxiety that many men must have felt. The bond of Masonic brotherhood could also serve to strengthen the esprit de corps and camaraderie amongst the new officers.

The appeal of Masonry to the military seems to have been justified. Washington Lodge listed 250 members by the end of the war and no doubt hundreds more gathered in the other military lodges meeting in army camps. Furthermore, many soldiers may have also attended lodges in towns and cities where they were garrisoned. Even today, officers and NCOs work in a hierarchical system with the junior ranks looking up to and imitating the senior officers. In this way, lower ranking members are mentored and instructed regarding what and how to carry on in the profession of arms. In a lodge everyone meets “on the level” meaning that all are

equal brothers. There were no ranks in Freemasonry. Most military lodges had a provision that stated that a military mason must “military men of rank” meaning above the grade of private.¹⁰⁵ Given that, the impact of Freemasonry must have been profound during the Revolution with at least 42 percent of the general officers in the continental army becoming Freemasons.¹⁰⁶

The military creates a unique environment that is insular in that it looks after its own people and uses norms and customs that civilians do not always understand. The shared hardships of combat and camp life create a bond that also build walls between the military and the population it is sworn to protect. During the Revolution, officers developed the conviction that their virtue would save the country in spite of its people. Their words revealed a growing fear of isolation, not as an army or member of the officer corps, but as individuals. As the war raged on, their complaints and denunciations of the civilian population often overrode this concern, which became clear in 1783. As talks of disbanding the army commenced, many in the army began to realize that their interpretation of the revolution did not have the support of the country they had fought to free. The army and the public over the course of the war had developed different ideas of patriotism and the revolutionary virtues that had secured victory.

Officers became convinced that the public did not understand the army’s wartime experiences. When Lieutenant Colonel Samuel Webb, a prisoner of war, anticipated being exchanged and returned to his regiment, Nathanael Green (a probable Mason) wrote him, “We

¹⁰⁵ Jefferson S. Conover. *Freemasonry in Michigan A Comprehensive History of Michigan Masonry From Its Earliest Introduction in 1764, Compiled*. (Coldwater, Michigan: The Conover Engraving and Printing Company, 1897), 17.

¹⁰⁶ Steven C. Bullock. *Revolutionary Brotherhood, Freemasonry and the Transformation of the American Social Order, 1730-1840*. (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996), 122.

shall be happy to see you at Camp, where you will find the true military spirit, justice, and generosity. The great body of the People you know are contracted, selfish and illiberal; and therefore not calculated to harmonize with a noble nature like yours.”¹⁰⁷ At the conclusion of the war and the disbanding of the army, many officers would return to the civilian lives they left behind, others would travel to new lands to settle and start businesses taking their memories of the comradery they shared with their brothers with them. While they could no longer be officers in the military, they still could share Masonic ties of Brotherhood. It is only logical that as the ex-officers became businessmen, politicians, judges, merchants, etc., they would naturally reach out to work with those they felt they could trust, who would act honorably, fellow Masons seemed an easy choice.

Early Masonic expansion occurred on the frontier during the Seven Years War. The Revolution saw fewer military lodges chartered with the American Union Lodge being the best documented. Lodges at that time served to unify soldiers from diverse regions and socio-economic backgrounds as opposed to chartering lodges in new areas. Ohio was the exception. Masonry had come to the Great Lakes region from the Quebec province during the French and Indian War. During the Revolutionary war, Ohio did not have any lodges in the territory. Once the war ended, veterans moved into Ohio to settle and, not surprisingly, some would be Masons.

Freemasons had likely been gathering around Marietta and Fort Harmer, holding informal meetings for some time. While not operating under a warrant, they undoubtedly knew one another as Brothers. This was demonstrably proven when one of their numbers

¹⁰⁷ Charles Royster. *A Revolutionary People at War, The Continental Army & American Character, 1775-1783*. (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1979), 316-317.

died. W. M. Cunningham, Past Grand Master and author, mentions that in of the first volume of the *History of Freemasonry in Ohio* (1909). He records on January 10th, 1789, the Masons of Marietta gathered to conduct the Masonic funeral rites for George James Varnum, a “revolutionary hero.” Several men who had served during the revolution were present as well as some of the early leaders in Ohio. It is interesting to note that Indian Chiefs, representative of the Six Nations and of the Wyandots, Delawares, Ottawas, Chippewas, Pottawattomies, and Sacs, all who had recently concluded a treaty, were in attendance for the solemn procession of a Masonic funeral.¹⁰⁸ It is not known if any of these chiefs were Freemasons, but Freemasonry did appeal to some Native Americans.

While it is known that Native Americans became Freemasons, to what extent and how involved they were is not well understood. According to some Masonic writers, this funeral was evidence of the knowledge and interest that many Indians had in Freemasonry. Cunningham says that he knew a Cherokee Indian Mason who was “thoroughly up in the work, and although he was himself made a Mason in an American lodge, yet he claimed that there was a knowledge of Masonic mysteries in some of the Indian tribes.”¹⁰⁹ Native American Masons and their activities will be discussed in more detail later, but as vital links in the fur trade, being able to work with Masonic Brothers certainly had advantages.

Whereas the vital importance that Native Americans played in the fur trade is well established, less is known about the role Freemasonry played in facilitating that trade. While this will be looked at in more depth in the following chapter, from a military perspective, the

¹⁰⁸ Allen E. Roberts. *Frontier Cornerstone, The Story of Freemasonry in Ohio, 1790-1980*. (The Grand Lodge of Free and Accepted Masons of Ohio, 1981), 16.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, 16.

actions of Chief Joseph Brant and Freemasonry are worth consideration here. Joseph Brant is one of the earliest known Native Americans to be made a Freemason. He was born in 1742 or 1743 along the banks of the Ohio River, around what would become Akron. His Indian name was Thayendanege, ironically meaning “He places two bets.” Brant would come to be revered by some, vilified by others. Regardless of contemporary opinions, most would agree that he was a key political, military and cultural figure amongst the Six Nations of the Iroquois, a group whose power at the time was pivotal.

Brant was dubbed by his biographer Isabel Thompson Kelsay as a “man of two worlds;”¹¹⁰ however, he operated in many overlapping contexts and in his dealings with the British, Americans, Native American groups, etc., and he certainly was a master of operating in the “middle ground.”¹¹¹ The middle ground refers to the geographic area from the Great Lakes to the upper portions of the Mississippi. It also describes a social and cultural process. This area was a blending a cultures, languages, empires and Native American tribes, villages and nations. In the “middle ground” diverse peoples sought to find ways to both accommodate each other, but also to create new mutually understandable practices and ways of doing things. People of a given side engaged in practices often based on what they thought the other side’s cultural understanding would be. The middle ground would last until the end of the War of 1812, when needs for accommodation broke down. Brant through his knowledge of European

¹¹⁰ Joy Porter. *Native American Freemasonry, Associationalism and Performance in America*. (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2011), 195.

¹¹¹ For an understanding of the term, Middle Ground, see Richard White. *The Middle Ground, Indians, Empires, and Republics in the Great Lakes Region, 1650-1815*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011). White’s seminal study coined the phrase and is an examination of accommodation and common meaning amongst the various peoples of the Great lakes Region.

culture and ways of conducting business was a master of negotiating difficult and subtle cultural nuances and hence was a master of the “middle ground.”

Early in Brant’s life, he impressed Sir William Johnson, the English superintendent of Indian Affairs and Freemason. Johnson sent Brant to Moore’s Indian Charity School in Lebanon, Connecticut, where he received what was considered to be an excellent education. As the Revolution approached and war seemed unavoidable, the Six Nations held a council fire near Albany. After much debate, they decided that the coming war was a private affair and they should stay out of it. Brant, a strong loyalist, feared that they would lose their land if the Americans won. With Johnsons influence, Brant succeeded in bringing to the side of the British four of the Six Nations: the Mohawks, Onondagas, Cayugas, and Senecas. The Oneidas and Tuscaroras ultimately sided with the Americans. This made Brant the principal war chief of the Six Nations and he also received a Captain’s commission in the British Army. It was shortly after this that Brant sailed for England with Guy Johnson, Sir William Johnson’s nephew.

While in England, Brant interacted with the upper levels of society and was made a Freemason. This occurred on April 26th, 1776 in a lodge of Moderns, the Falcon on Princess Street, Leicester Fields.¹¹² His was treated as a foreigner of high rank and status. He had dinner with the Prince of Wales, had his portrait painted by the famous artist George Romney, and it was reported that King George III presented him with his Masonic Fellowcraft Apron. After

¹¹² Albert G Mackey. *Encyclopedia of Freemasonry and Kindred Sciences Volume 1*. (New York: The Masonic History Company, 1929). 149.

that, Brant refused to kiss the ring of the king stating that we are Brothers and equals. He did, however, kiss the hand of the queen.¹¹³

Many Native American tribes embraced Freemasonry. The first recorded Native American mason was an Iroquois. Masonic rituals held an appeal for the Iroquois who had developed an elaborate set of rituals and protocols by the 18th century. Iroquois symbolism and experiences may have made Masonic rituals comprehensible, and in turn Euro-American Masons may have had an understanding of Iroquois ritual.¹¹⁴ These rituals also served to bring new members into the tribe. Masonic Degree rituals involve a symbolic death and bringing Brothers into the Fraternity, essentially a Masonic tribe. Lastly, when one looks at some Indian societies such as the Chippewa's Midewiwin Society, or Grand Medicine Society, one can quickly see similarities to Freemasonry. While the Midewiwin predates European arrival, over time rituals likely changed and became a post-contact religion that blended Native and Christian elements. This blending typified many post contact aspects of the "middle ground." Like Masonry, it was deist in that each had a reverence for a supreme spirit or Grand Architect of the Universe. Members met in ornate and secluded ceremonies using prescribed implements and carried out symbolic slayings and initiating new members.¹¹⁵ By having a shared set of rituals and using Masonry to initiate Native American Brothers, this served to expand Masonry and may have been seen as a form of extending kinship networks. Native

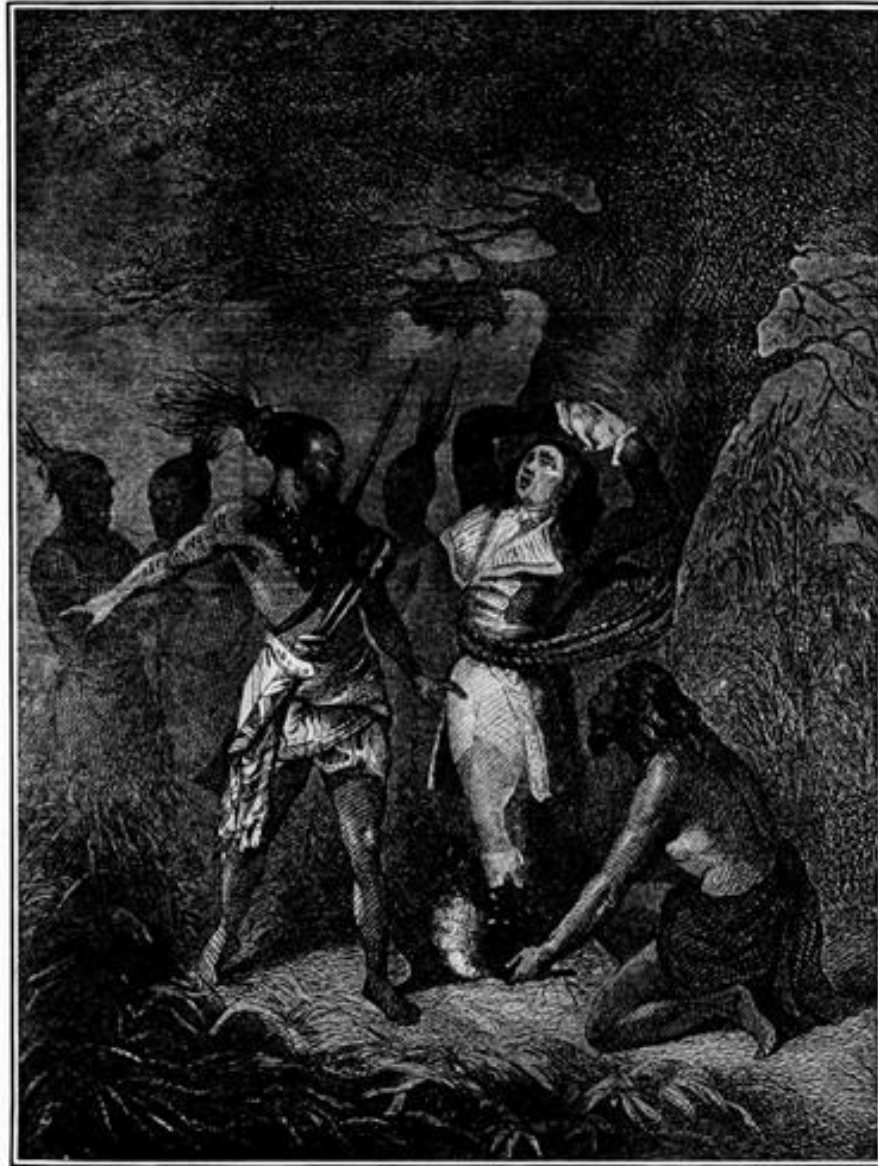
¹¹³ Joy Porter. *Native American Freemasonry, Associationalism and Performance in America*. (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2011), 196.

¹¹⁴ Ibid., 194-195.

¹¹⁵ Joy Porter. *Native American Freemasonry, Associationalism and Performance in America. The Attractions of Freemasonry to Indians and Others, Part Two*. (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2011), 151.

Americans often had rituals when bringing Europeans into a tribe as members in order to extend political ties or trade networks.¹¹⁶ Masonry may have been viewed in much the same way. This was a solemn ritual whose oaths carried meaning and reciprocity, which helped to facilitate communication and trade networks in the Great Lakes region.

¹¹⁶ For an explanation of kinship, tribal identity and intermarriage, see: Richard While. *The Middle Ground, Indians, Empires, and Republics in the Great Lakes Region, 1650-1815*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 16-20 and 335-336.



THAYENDANEGEA (JOSEPH BRANT) SAVING THE
LIFE OF CAPT. JOHN MCKINSTREY, A BROTHER FREEMASON.
FROM A CONTEMPORARY FRENCH PRINT.

Figure 4: From Julius F. Saches, Litt D. *Old Masonic Lodges of Pennsylvania, "Moderns and Ancients: 1730-1800.* (Philadelphia, 1913), 3.

Joseph Brant took his Masonic Obligation seriously and rendered assistance when called upon. An example is after the battle of the cedars, which took place near Montreal. Captain John McKinstry (McKinstrey) was wounded and taken prisoner by Native American troops allied with the British. Captain McKinstry, who had some previous success in fighting the Indian

troops, was feared and resented by them, who, now that he was a prisoner, was “doomed to die at the stake, accompanied with all those horrid and protracted torments which the Indians know so well how both to inflict and to endure.”¹¹⁷ He had been secured to the tree, and the preparations for his being sacrificed were proceeding, when the captive made the “great mystical appeal of a Mason in the hour of danger. It was seen and understood and felt by the Chief of the Six Nations, also a Colonial unattached in the British Army who was present at the occasion, by the influence of his position, in rescuing his American Brother from his impending fate.” He was later escorted to Quebec, where he received his parole and was returned to America.¹¹⁸

After the war, Brant received a pension from Britain and settled in Canada. He established the Grand River Reservation for the Mohawk Indians. He remained an active Mason for the rest of his life. He affiliated with of Lodge No. 11 at the Mohawk Village and was its first Master. He later joined Barton Lodge, Hamilton which organized on January 31st, 1796.¹¹⁹ Brant and his life provide an example of how Freemasonry could serve as a bridge in a multinational and multicultural environment, such as the Great lakes region. Masonry would continue to expand into the frontier, creating links from trading posts, to cites, and port towns throughout Canada and the Great Lakes region. Many Masonic veterans of the Revolutionary War settled in the Ohio territory, where they likely held informal meetings. In doing so, they

¹¹⁷ Robert Freke Gould. *Military Lodges, The Apron and the Sword*. (London: Cornerstone Publishers, 2014), 84-85. Note, the account is also mentioned in: Julius F. Saches, Litt D. *Old Masonic Lodges of Pennsylvania, “Moderns and Ancients: 1730-1800*. (Philadelphia, 1913), 3.

¹¹⁸ Robert Freke Gould. *Military Lodges, The Apron and the Sword*. (London: Cornerstone Publishers, 2014), 84-85.

¹¹⁹ John Ross Robertson. *The History of Freemasonry in Canada, From Its Introduction in 1749*. (Toronto: George N Morang & Company, Ltd. 1900), 473.

knew each other as Brothers and would certainly come together for important events, such as a funeral.

It is the funeral of Brother George James Varnum, a “Revolutionary Hero” that formally brings Freemasonry to Ohio. Shortly after the funeral Rufus Putnam, Benjamin Tupper, Griffin Green, Robert Oliver, Erza Lunt, William Stacy, William Burnham, Anselm Tupper, Thomas Stanley, and Ebenezer Sproat met to discuss the formation of a lodge. Rufus Putnam, who was a Colonel in the French and Indian War and a General during the Revolution, had been made a Master Mason in the American Union Lodge on September 9th 1779. He was aware that Jonathan Heart, the last Master of that lodge before the war ended had taken its warrant to Fort Harmer. Putnam sent a letter:

To Worshipful Brother Jonathan Heart, at Harmar,
Worshipful,
Having considered the disadvantages that the Brethren of the Ancient and Honorable Society of Free and Accepted Masons have labored under in the Western Hemisphere relative to their further knowledge of the East, we having no further resource of knowledge but only through you, have to request you, Worshipful, to take us under your immediate patronage and establish us on a permanent basis – and for that purpose to give us and the other Brethren of the fraternity in this quarter to meet as soon as possibly consistent.¹²⁰

Heart replied in a letter dated June 26th, 1790. He did acknowledge that the warrant from the American Union Lodge gave them permission to make Masons in areas where no lodge existed, which this was clearly the case.¹²¹ He was concerned that prior to the

¹²⁰ Allen E. Roberts. *Frontier Cornerstone, The Story of Freemasonry in Ohio, 1790-1980*. (The Grand Lodge of Free and Accepted Masons of Ohio, 1981), 16-18.

¹²¹ A copy of the original warrant dated from 1776 states: “Do appoint you and the said Joel Clarke, Esq. Master of the American Union Lodge, now erected in Roxbury, or wheresoever your Body shall remove on the continent of America; provided it be where no grand master appointed...” For the full transcript, see *Old Masonic Lodges of Pennsylvania “Moderns and Ancients” 1730-1800. Compiled From Original Records In The Archives of the*

Revolution, all Masonic authority exercised in America was “derived from the Grand Lodge of Great Britain” and as such he was unsure under what authority he currently was warranted to operate. In the end, he decided that the authority granted to him was still valid since the Grand Lodge of Massachusetts had granted it and it was still lawfully constituted, so he granted the charter. Heart, who was still concerned about the legality of the matter sent letters to the Grand Lodges of New York, Pennsylvania, and Massachusetts seeking clarification. Pennsylvania responded stating that “This ray of light which has thus broke in upon the gloom and darkness of ages, they consider as a happy presage that the time is fast approaching when the knowledge of Masonry will completely circle the globe.” Massachusetts said it “Applauds and commends your views and pursuits...Your warrant is, beyond doubt, a perfect and good one....”¹²² Thus, the first Masonic Lodge communication in the Ohio Territory was held on June 28th, 1790. Masonry established in Ohio, now encircled the Great Lakes region, networks and trade and communication quickly solidified for Masonic, business, and political purposes.

As the lodges spread throughout the colonies, they accomplished many things in addition to the spread of Masonry. Masonry, being an enlightenment organization, also brought those ideas with the military lodges wherever they travelled. Military officers in the British system often came from aristocratic families from a well ordered hierarchical society. In the colonies, merchants, and colonial officers certainly had different social standing, but Masonry could help to bring people from diverse backgrounds together. This would prove

R.W. Grand Lodge, F. & A. M. of Pennsylvania, Under the Direction of the Committee on Library. By Julius F. Sachse, Litt. D. 1913. Pg. 381-382.

¹²² Allen E. Roberts. *Frontier Cornerstone, The Story of Freemasonry in Ohio, 1790-1980.* (The Grand Lodge of Free and Accepted Masons of Ohio, 1981), 18-21. A full copy of Heart’s letter can be found on pages 18-19.

especially useful when forming trade relations across large areas. Furthermore, when looking at the rituals performed by these Army Lodges, the strict discipline and military precision of the Brothers must have made a strong impact on those watching. Military units on parade are impressive and surely the military brothers would have approached Masonic Degree work with parade-like attention to detail. These moving ceremonies certainly encouraged men to seek membership, thus spreading Masonry throughout the world.

The reach and Brotherhood afforded by the fraternity would help brothers far beyond the lodge rooms. Sir Lucius served at the reduction of the Isle of Bourbon, 1810, as Admiral Superintendent at Malta, 1843; Admiral of the Fleet, 1864. He was also twice the Master of the Phoenix Lodge and Provincial Grand Master of Hampshire often spoke about Masonic principals. At a meeting on August 23rd, 1850, he said, "Let then go to any part of the world they pleased, they would be sure to find Freemasons, and by making themselves known, as everywhere the same signs and signals were used, they received as much assistance as would be accorded to them even in their own country...."¹²³ This observation would serve Brothers well in their business endeavors in the Great Lakes region and the Atlantic World.

¹²³ Robert Freke Gould. *Military Lodges, The Apron and the Sword*. (New Orleans: Cornerstone Book Publishers, 2014), 95-96.

Chapter III: Masonic Brotherhood and the Creation of Regional Business Networks

The Great Lakes region of the 18th century was an amalgamation of various Native American tribes, such as the Iroquois, Huron, Potawatomi, Ottawa, and Ojibwa. These tribes lived along side of French-Canadian, British, Scottish, French settlers, and after the Revolutionary War, Americans. These settlements were a mix of Catholic and Protestant faiths. European and colonial traders pushed further west to reach the Native Americans who had the best access to fur, while settlers after the Revolutionary War poured into the Ohio Valley. Concepts of state or national identity were not particularly strong. In an environment like this, personal relationships in business were crucial. A perpetual influx of newcomers reinforced the need for establishing trusted partnerships. In this world, Masonry could provide that trusted relationship among men who found themselves brothers in the fraternity.

All Masons take an obligation as part of receiving their Degrees in the fraternity. There is a new obligation associated with each succeeding Degree. Many mistake this and call it an oath, which has more religious aspects to it. An obligation, in a legal sense, is synonymous with duty. It is derived, from the Latin word *obligatio*, which signifies a trying or binding. This binds the man to do some act, like military duty. By his obligation, a Freemason is bound to his order and in many ways it is what makes an individual a Mason.¹²⁴ One section of the obligation is as follows: "I also swear, that I will not wrong a Brother, nor see him wronged, but give him timely Notice of all approaching Dangers whatsoever, as far as in me is. I will also serve a Brother as

¹²⁴ Albert G. Mackey, *Encyclopedia of Freemasonry and Kindred Sciences, Comprising the Whole Range of the Arts, Sciences and Literature of the Masonic Institution Volume II* (New York: The Masonic History Company, 1929), 727.

much as lies in my Power, without being detrimental to myself or Family.”¹²⁵ In the absence of other connections, this obligation from an ever-growing fraternity would provide a merchant, trader, miner, military officer, or politician some assurance that if dealing with a fellow Freemason, that man took an obligation to provide assistance, and the obligation was reciprocated. These mutual obligations served to connect many Freemasons throughout the region and established early trade networks in the Great Lakes, New England, and the broader Atlantic world.

The previous chapter outlined the establishment of lodges throughout the Great Lakes region. Lodges were established in towns, cities, trading outposts and on rare occasions, ships. These lodges and their members became nodes in an expanding network of business and political connections. Bound by mutual obligation to aid each other, Freemasons, if possible, would often choose to work with other Freemasons. Masons created companies, partnerships, and relationships throughout the Great Lakes region. These fraternal business connections formed an early transnational network that often superseded political, national, or military considerations. In an area of loose government control, little sense of nationalism and little established trade regulations or law, Masons found they could rely on Brothers and established many long-distance, successful trade and support networks.

¹²⁵ Albert Pike, “Esoterica” *The Symbolism of the Blue Degrees in Freemasonry*, (Washington, D.C.: The Scottish Rite Research Society, 2008), 406. This excerpt of the Obligation comes from a book called *Jachin and Boaz, or an Authentic Key to the Door of Free-Masonry*, first published in 1762. Its text was used by Thomas Smith Webb in creating his extremely influential work, *The Freemason’s Monitor* that had a profound impact on American Masonic ritual and thus is especially relevant to American Freemasons during the late 18th and early 19th centuries, the time this study examines.

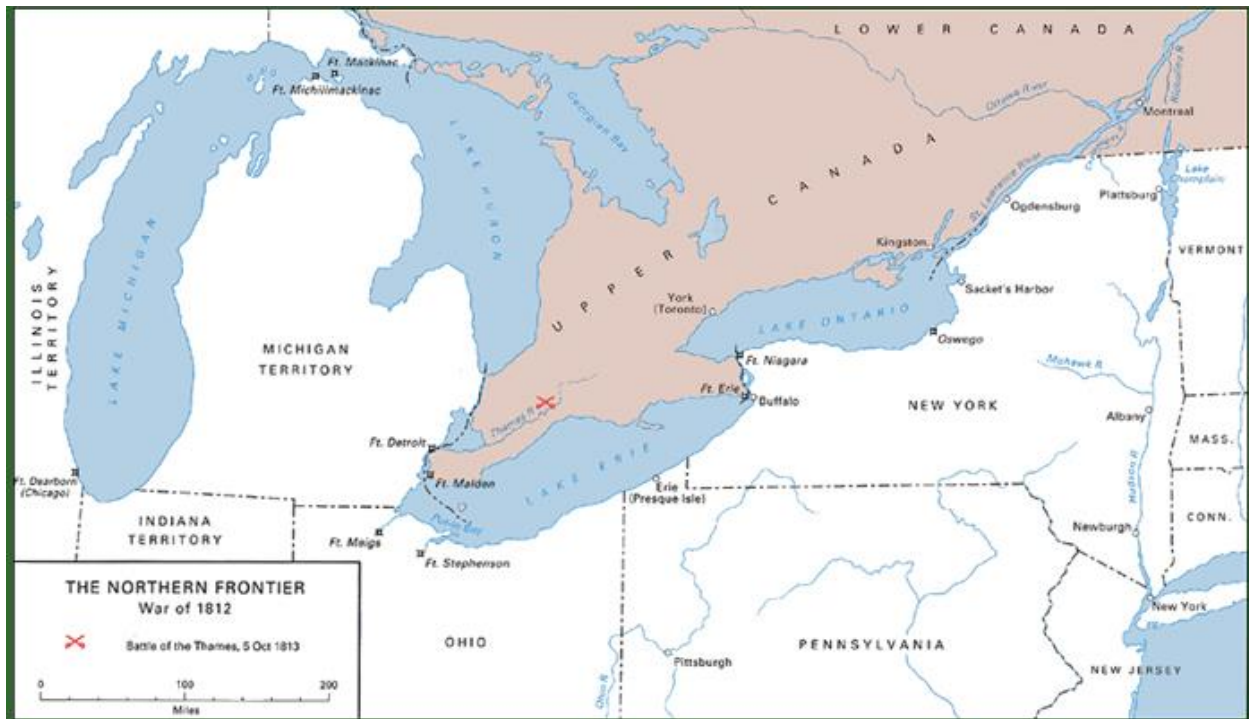


Figure 5: The Great Lakes, Canada and New England Regions, along with key cities, settlements and trading centers in the early 19th century¹²⁶

Most men who became masons led quiet lives working various occupations. These men had various motives for joining the fraternity and like most people just wanted to live a peaceful, comfortable existence and sadly, over time, little remains in the historical records to examine their lives. The masons have always been dedicated to keeping records, however, and this allows one to examine lodge records for membership and to look into members' occupations and non-masonic records, such as family and business records to ascertain their dealings with other Masons throughout the region in question. This chapter will look at masons in various occupations to demonstrate that they took their obligations seriously and would network with other Brothers when possible.

¹²⁶ The War of 1812. <https://history.army.mil/books/AMH-V1/ch06.htm> (Accessed June 6th 2020).

When looking at the prominent men who were masons, three main occupations stand out, military officer, politician, and trader. Perhaps it is not surprising that records for those engaged in regional, national, and international trade yield a great deal of information regarding networking and connections. At the end of the Seven Years War, through the American Revolution and onto the War of 1812, Lodges were established throughout the Great Lakes region. Masons as members of these lodges engaged in assorted activities, often reaching out and relying on other Freemasons to further their interests.

Sir William Johnson, 1st Baronet, was born around 1715, in County Meath, Ireland.¹²⁷ His uncle, Admiral Peter Warren, had purchased a large amount of land in the Mohawk Valley in the province of New York. Admiral Warren made a deal with Johnson that the latter would go to New York and manage the former's estate for the period of three years. During that time, Johnson increased the productivity of the land and engaged in the fur trade. However, he realized that to optimize his fur trade activity, he would need land on the opposite side of the Mohawk River, so, when his three years tenure was over in 1739, he purchased his own land and began building his own estate and trade network.¹²⁸

¹²⁷ Three Baronetcies have been created for people with the surname Johnson. The Johnson Baronetcy, of New York and North America was created in the Baronetage of Great Britain on November 27th, 1755 for William Johnson. The baronetcy was awarded for military victories. His son, John Johnson would become the second Baronet. There does appear to be a specific title associated with this rank. For additional biographical information see: Julian Gwyn, "JOHNSON, Sir WILLIAM," in *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, vol. 4, University of Toronto/Université Laval, 2003–, accessed September 30, 2020, http://www.biographi.ca/en/bio/johnson_william_4E.html.

Earle Thomas, "JOHNSON, Sir JOHN," in *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, vol. 6, University of Toronto/Université Laval, 2003–, accessed September 30, 2020, http://www.biographi.ca/en/bio/johnson_john_6E.html.

¹²⁸ Heather Devine, "Roots in the Mohawk Valley: Sir William Johnson's Legacy in the Northwest Company," in *The Fur Trade Revisited, Selected Papers of the Sixth North American Fur Trade Conference, Mackinac Island, Michigan, 1991*. Jennifer S.H. Brown, W.J. Eccles, and Donald P. Heldman, ed. (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 1994), 221-222. Devine mentions how Sir William Johnson created a patronage system similar to

Sir William Johnson was made a Master Mason at Albany, in Union Lodge No. 1, in 1765. Becoming a mason must have had an impact on him. He requested a charter and became a founding member and first Master of St. Patrick's Lodge No. 8 on August 23, 1766. George Harrison, the Provincial Grand Master in the charter states, "Know ye that we, of the great trust and confidence reposed in out worthy and well-beloved brother, the Honorable Sir William Johnson, Baronet, do hereby constitute and appoint him to be our Master, Guy Johnson, Esq., Senior Warden...of Saint Patrick's Lodge No. 8 to be held at Johnson hall, in the county of Albany, in the Province of New York." Sir William Johnson must have valued what masonry represented. Beyond being a founding member, as its first master, this position carried extra duties and responsibilities that would take away from other activities.¹²⁹

As William Johnson's patronage network grew, he founded Johnstown, NY, which was in the newly formed Tryon County. Tryon County had been introduced to the legislation and promoted heavily by Sir William and his supporters. It was established in March of 1772 by a bill that separated the western regions of Albany County from Albany and placed a new seat of government control in Johnstown, a town established by William Johnson. The new government base was about 50 miles west of the Hudson River. The eastern border of Tyron ran from the boundary with Pennsylvania along the Mohawk River, through the Mohawk Valley at the now gone, Johnson's Village. From there it ran to the Canadian border. Johnston's Village, now Amsterdam, NY, was the location of Sir William Johnston's estate and Guy Park.

what he knew about from the highlands of Scotland and even brought over Scottish émigrés to work on his land as tenant farmers. She does not explore Sir William Johnson or his son Sir John Johnson's Masonic network and connections which also played a large role in their business ventures.

¹²⁹ Peter Ross, *A Standard History of Freemasonry in the State of New York, Including Lodge, Chapter, Council, Commandery and Scottish Rite Bodies, Volume 1*. (New York: The Lewis Publishing Company, 1899), 40-41.

This was an estate built by Guy Johnson, Sir William Johnson's nephew. Lake George and the forts that lead from it to Albany marked the eastern boundary. The western boundary was set by a treaty with the Six Nations at Fort Stanwix in 1768.¹³⁰

The formation of the new county with the county seat at Johnstown, entirely under the control of William Johnson, allowed him to control local politics, influence trade networks and promote the interests of his associates. Sir William established a Masonic Lodge at Jamestown in the Mohawk Valley. This allowed for the local elites to strengthen their ties with each other as well as to come together a Masons to support one another's endeavors. The Lodge, St. Patrick's Lodge No.8, was warranted by Grand Master George Harrison at Johnstown on August 23, 1766.¹³¹

This lodge was intended to create a core of "learned men of ability and consequence," as a cornerstone for his Johnstown project. The Brothers would be men of note, politically, militarily, and socially. These lodge founders held wealth in land and rents paid by tenant farmers, were magistrates, and some were in the Indian Department. In short, these Masonic Brothers had the means, connections and abilities to enact change and build lasting institutions and communities on the New York frontier. Not only did the lodge bind the leading men of the Mohawk Valley together, but it extended connections and the Masonic network of the leading men from other lodges at Albany, New York, and along the expanding Masonic frontier.¹³²

¹³⁰ Chapter 1534: An Act to divide the County of Albany into three Counties, *The colonial laws of New York from the year 1664 to the Revolution* Vol. 5, (New York State, 1894), 819.

¹³¹ Peter Ross, *A Standard History of Freemasonry in the State of New York, Including Lodge, Chapter, Council, Commandery and Scottish Rite Bodies, Volume 1*. (New York: The Lewis Publishing Company, 1899), 40.

¹³² John Guzzardo. Sir William Johnson's Official Family: Patron and Clients in an Anglo American Empire, 1742-1777. "Minutes of St. Patrick's Lodge, St. Patrick's Archives, Johnstown." (New York: Syracuse University

Regarding Masonic patronage and appointments, William Johnson's two sons-in-law, Guy Johnson and Daniel Claus, were named Senior Warden and Junior Warden. John Butler, who was Sir William Johnson's most trusted lieutenant in the Indian Affairs Department, was named Secretary of the Lodge. John Butler was involved in the highest levels of government and had acquired an estate estimated to be 26,000 acres at Butlersbury near the large Mohawk village of Caughnawaga. Butler was second in command to Sir William Johnson, British Superintendent of Indian Affairs. Butler would be selected over New York's Governor James DeLancy's choice for Justice of the Peace, John Lyne. It was argued that the decision was made because Lyne did not live within the borders of Tryon, which may be true, but Butler was also a fellow Freemason whereas the Governor James DeLancy and John Lyne were not.¹³³

Masons had regular meetings to conduct business, hold educational talks and special meetings to initiate new candidates into the lodge, progressing through the three degrees. In the Masonic calendar, two days stand out as especially important; those are for the two Patron Saints of Masonry, Saint John the Baptist on June 24th and Saint John the Evangelist on December 27th, marking roughly mid-summer and mid-winter. These days were important for celebrations, feasting, installing officers into positions and a public display, which often involved a march from the Lodge to a church for a sermon and then onto a hall for a feast, songs, and celebration.

Press: 1975), 234. St. Patrick's Lodge is the 4th oldest lodge in New York and is still active. The lodge retains its original officer jewels, charter, and original minutes from 1766 to the present. As a provincial lodge during colonial times, it is actually older than the Grand Lodge of New York.

¹³³ Judd D. Olshan. "Butlers of the Mohawk Valley: Family Traditions and the Establishment of British Empire in Colonial New York." PhD Dissertation, (Syracuse University, 2015), 208. Assessed online at: [surface.syr.edu: https://surface.syr.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1399&context=etd](https://surface.syr.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1399&context=etd)

Lodges were careful to note who was present at and absent from these events and often, if a Brother was absent without a valid excuse, he would be fined as a way to cover feast costs which had been ordered well in advance of the event. Saint Patrick's Lodge minutes from 1767 provide a look into the affinity circle of Sir William Johnson as well as the network of Brothers in attendance. Lodge members "marched in procession to Saint John's Church in the village of Johnstown, where Divine Service (& Sermon suitable to the occasion) was performed by the Rev.d Mr. Rosencrantz. From whence returned in like order, and held the Feast of St. John at the House of Brother Tice then Closed Lodge until the 1st Thursday in February next." Brothers who were listed as absent include: Daniel Campbell, John Butler, James Frey, George Croghan, Christopher Yates, and John Tarleton. Brothers present included: Sir William Johnson, Guy Johnson, Daniel Claus, Robert Adams, Benjamin Roberts, Michael Byrne, John Constable, James Phyn, Alexander Ellice, Hendrick Frey and visiting Brothers: Daniel Denniston, Moses Ibbitt, Gilbert Tice, Augustine Provost, and Joseph Irwin. This is the list of the "movers and shakers" in politics, business, and the social arena from New York, Albany, to the frontier at Johnstown.¹³⁴ With the Seven Years War over and expansion pushing westward, Masons moved west for business and other opportunities. With the military lodges often becoming permanent, civilian lodges, Brothers moving east had a ready group to call and rely on furthering Masonic connections.

James Phyn, Alexander Ellice and Company of Schenectady, who were both Masons, worked in partnership with Hayman Levy. Hayman Levy is thought to have been a Freemason.

¹³⁴ Minute Book, St. Patrick's Lodge #4, F&AM, St. Patrick's Archives. Monday, December 28, 1767; August 4, 1769; March 7, 1771. Information assessed on: <https://newyorkalmanack.com/2013/01/johnstown-st-patricks-masonic-lodge/>

There is anecdotal evidence to suggest that he was, in keeping with Masonic ideas of being open to many religions. Hayman Levy was Jewish and possibly belonged to King David's Lodge No. 1, in New York. Moses M. Hays received a warrant for the lodge under Massachusetts and formed in New York on February 23, 1769, signed under George Harrison, Provincial Grand Master of New York. It is probable that under this warrant, many Jewish Freemasons were made, including Hayman Levy. Unfortunately the minutes for King David's Lodge of New York cannot be found.¹³⁵ It is possible that the records were lost or destroyed when the British occupied New York during the Revolution. We do know that many prominent Jewish men joined Masonic Lodges and many fled to Philadelphia when the British occupied New York, Hayman Levy included. Sadly, the printed records do not have as much information as one would hope to find about Jewish Masonic membership and activity prior to 1810.

These networks extended over generations. The Jewish Encyclopedia from 1906 has this to say about Hayman Levy:

Colonial merchant of New York; born in 1721; died in New York in 1789. He engaged in business at an early age and is mentioned as the owner of a privateer and as engaged in the fur trade in 1760 (see "New York Mercury," Aug. 17, 1761). In 1765 the signature "Hayman Levy, Junior," was appended to the Non-Importation Resolutions drawn up by merchants in Philadelphia, but it can not be said with certainty that it was the signature of the Hayman Levy treated here....He was one of the most widely known merchants of New York, and was probably the first employer of John Jacob Astor. He had sixteen children, some of whom were prominent citizens of New York.¹³⁶

¹³⁵ Samuel Oppenheim, "The Jews and Masonry in the United States Before 1810," *Publications of the American Jewish Historical Society*, No. 19 (1910): 29-30.

¹³⁶ The Jewish Encyclopedia, A Descriptive Record of the History, Religion, Literature, and Customs of the Jewish People from the Earliest Times to the Present Day. 12 Vol. (New York and London: Funk and Wagnalls Co., 1901-1906). The encyclopedia is now online and in the public domain and can be searched by name or topic. Website: <http://www.jewishencyclopedia.com/>

The entry about Hayman being involved in the fur trade and the first employer of John Jacob Astor is particularly interesting. As we will see, John Jacob Astor went on to establish the American Fur Company became the wealthiest man in the United States; moreover, he was an active mason, serving as Master of a Lodge and the Grand Treasurer of the New York Grand Lodge. It is possible that during his early years, he may have seen men with Hayman Levy discussing business and going to a lodge that he was not permitted to enter. A young man as driven as Astor would certainly be interested in gaining entry. He was not alone.

Sir William Johnson as Superintendent of Indian Affairs for the northern colonies and as a Major General extended his connections with various regiments and merchant activities in the region. He was not in the chain of command of any provincial authority and reported directly to London. This freedom allowed Johnson the opportunity to cultivate many relationships with military officers and Native American leaders. One such officer was a Scottish client of Johnson, Lieutenant Hugh Fraser of the 78th Regiment, the Fraser's Highlanders. Fraser was introduced to Johnson in 1763 when he approached Johnson about settling soldiers mustered out of the British Army at Quebec in 1763. Johnson was able to attract several veterans and their families to settle on his lands. Johnson was also able to help Fraser and his father-in-law Lieutenant John McTavish to obtain military bounty lands in northern New York.¹³⁷ Hugh Fraser was present at the formation of St. Patrick's Lodge in

¹³⁷ Heather Devine. "Roots in the Mohawk Valley: Sir William Johnson's Legacy in the Northwest Company," in *The Fur Trade Revisited, Selected Papers of the Sixth North American Fur Trade Conference, Mackinac Island, Michigan, 1991*. Jennifer S.H. Brown, W.J. Eccles, and Donald P. Heldman, ed (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 1994), 226.

1766.¹³⁸ In addition, he eventually moved to Quebec and remained an active Mason, showing up in the Principal Officers Records for St. Andrew's Lodge, No. 2, in the Registry of Quebec as a Junior Warden in 1779.¹³⁹ One of his kinsmen was John McTavish's son and Hugh Fraser's brother-in-law, Simon McTavish. Simon McTavish would become the single most influential person in the development of the Northwest Company.

Simon McTavish appears to have worked on the Johnson estate for a time but continued his apprenticeship under a friend of William Johnson's, a man named Goldsbrow Banyar of New York. While working on the Johnson estate, Simon would have been exposed to all sorts of people conducting business with Sir William Johnson. Individuals of diverse race, class, and creed, including black slaves, Mohawk Indians, British military officers, Indian Department Officials, Irish and Scottish tenant farmers, and Native Americans from villages far from the urban centers of New York, Boston, and Philadelphia.¹⁴⁰ All of these people comprised some part of William Johnson's affinity circle and network. Many of the most important were Brother Masons.

While young McTavish would have taken part in the daily work, business, and recreational life of the estate, there were some activities that were prohibited to him. One such activity was meetings at the Masonic Hall. Of course he would see who was coming and

¹³⁸ Peter Ross, *A Standard History of Freemasonry in the State of New York, Including Lodge, Chapter, Council, Commandery and Scottish Rite Bodies, Volume 1*. (New York: The Lewis Publishing Company, 1899), 43-44.

¹³⁹ John H. Graham, *Outlines of the History of Freemasonry in the Province of Quebec*. (Montreal: John Lovell & Son, 1892), 56.

¹⁴⁰ Heather Devine. "Roots in the Mohawk Valley: Sir William Johnson's Legacy in the Northwest Company," in *The Fur Trade Revisited, Selected Papers of the Sixth North American Fur Trade Conference, Mackinac Island, Michigan, 1991*. Jennifer S.H. Brown, W.J. Eccles, and Donald P. Heldman, ed (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 1994), 226-228.

going from the hall and how many of these Masons were close associates of Sir William. Some were relatives like Daniel Claus, his son-in-law and nephew Guy Johnson. Others were military connections such as Normand MacLeod and Simon McTavish's own brother-in-law, Hugh Fraser.¹⁴¹

Sir William also developed an understanding of the Mohawk language, customs and courtesies through his marital union with Mohawk clan matron Molly Brant. He was one of the few Europeans who understood the unifying force behind the Iroquois Confederacy, the maternal clan structure. To be successful in creating a patronage system within this clan structure, one had to win over the key clan matriarchs, whose responsibility it was to appoint sachems, village councils, etc. These people were instrumental in controlling the warriors. It is hard to ascertain to what extent Johnson understood the complex workings of the Iroquois clan system. Regardless, his efforts to understand the Mohawk culture, combined with his understanding of how patronage systems work allowed him to identify and successfully exploit networks within the Mohawk community.¹⁴²

By cultivating friendships with a series of clans through the giving of gifts and provisions, he was able to accumulate a large debt obligation, and the Mohawk leaders looked to provisions from Johnson in order to maintain their leadership status within the tribe. This

¹⁴¹ Ibid., 228. The Masonic members had meeting must have made an impression on Simon McTavish. He was the maternal uncle of Simon McGillivray and took responsibility for his education. Simon McGillivray would go on to become the Masonic Provincial Grand Master for Upper Canada.

¹⁴² Ibid., 224. Sir William Johnson has been treated differently by historians over the years. Some look at him as functioning as a frontier diplomat in a world with a precarious balance of power, something akin to the Middle Ground concept. Others look at his actions as a slow domination of European culture over Native American culture, for example see: Gail D. Danvers, "Gendered Encounters: Warriors, Women, and William Johnson," in *Journal of American Studies*, 35 (2001).

helped to ensure that the British would have the tribes' political and military support if needed. Sir William also extended a personal patronage to key members such as the Mohawk sachem "King" Hendrick (Tiyanoga) and familial ties with Molly (Konwatsi'tsi-aiénne), who was Sir Williams's consort, with whom she had eight children, and her brother and eventual fellow mason, Joseph Brant (Thayendanegea). There has been a great deal written about Molly Brant; these writings span from wishful romanticism to fiction derived from folklore. What is known is that Mohawk women lived in a matrilineal and matrilocal nation; she would wield power in her own right. In Iroquoian society, women chose the sachems and had great influence over the warriors. Women owned the home and their name or clan name is what the children take on, not the husbands.¹⁴³ However, as she could not have been a mason, it is not the purpose of this paper to go into the historiography of Molly Brant other than to say that while she was never given the title of "wife" or "Lady," she must have dominated the household. Guests in their letters mentioned her hospitality. She had her own room and her belongings were excluded from the general inventory taken in 1774. This suggests that she legally was her own person and had the rights of the mistress of the house. Moreover, her children by William Johnson had their own rooms in the hall and were given every advantage, such as education and business training in Pennsylvania and Montreal. Finally, she and her children were well provided for in Williams's will.¹⁴⁴

¹⁴³ Barbara Graymont, "KOÑWATSI'TSIAIÉÑNI (Mary Brant)," in *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, vol. 4, University of Toronto/Université Laval, 2003–, accessed September 30, 2020, http://www.biographi.ca/en/bio/konwatsitsiaienni_4E.html.

¹⁴⁴ Milton W. Hamilton. "Sir William Johnson's Wives," *New York History*, 38 (1975), 25-26.

Understanding of how masonry spread throughout the Great Lakes region during and after the Seven Years War and having the names of early known Masonic Brothers, one can now look at how this network expanded and supported the endeavors of members of the fraternity. Sir William Johnson, his associates and other New York merchants, fur traders, political and military officers understood the value of the groundwork laid in the Mohawk Valley following the Seven Years War. This is something that is often overlooked by historians today.¹⁴⁵ In addition, when looking at fur trade activities, there is a great deal of research on the city-based merchants in places such as New York City and Albany. Networks that pushed the frontier west, from Oswego to Detroit and up to Mackinaw are discussed from various perspectives, but among many of the key leaders in the trade a common unifying element was their membership as masons.

With most colonies firmly looking out to sea for economic development potential, the surrender of Canada in 1760 opened the west to British occupation. On September 12th Major (and Masonic Brother) Robert Rogers moved west and took possession of Detroit on November 29th, 1760. Access to the upper Great Lakes and the valuable fur trade was open for the British. The Firm of James Phyn and Alexander Ellice of Schenectady came into its own after John

¹⁴⁵ Several historians provide studies of the fur trade. One such example is: Thomas Elliot Norton. Norton provides a thorough study of New York's fur trade but discusses the Mohawk Valley only regarding British-Iroquois diplomacy in defense of the frontier. His study examines the activities of Sir William Johnson, but focuses mostly on his role in the Indian Department. Nothing regarding Masonry as a connective element is suggested. Norton does look at routes of trade and communication with a focus on Albany-Montreal, Hudson Valley and New York. The Mohawk Valley is thought of as a distant frontier. See Norton, *The Fur Trade in Colonial New York, 1686-1776* (Madison, WI: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1974). Other scholars such as Cathy Matson and Gail D. MacLeitch detail various aspects of trade, networks and the experiences of Native Americans, but Freemasonry as a unifying element to transcend religion, ethnic and national boundaries is not considered.

Duncan, another partner, sold his interest in the company and retired on November 6, 1767.¹⁴⁶ From Pontiac's War in 1763 and leading up to the American Revolutionary War, essentially from 1763-1776, fur traders and merchants had to cope with constant financial impediments, including high import-export tariffs at port cities, contradicting Indian, colonial, and military policies, non-importation agreements and fluctuating credit and currency rates. In order to operate in this environment, one needed trusted partners stationed at crucial nodes in the trading network. Masons working with other Masons provided another layer of assurance that the partners scattered across the region would be looking out for each other's best interests. Phyn, Ellice and Company operated out of Schenectady, Montreal, London, Detroit, and Mackinaw. In many ways it did what other trade outfits also did: they sold manufactured products from Great Britain to various Native American tribes in exchange for furs.¹⁴⁷ To facilitate credit and have a contact in New York City, drafts were drawn on Hayman Levy, a possible Mason, who conducted much of the firm's New York Business.

In the years leading up to the Revolutionary War, the firm would have to be able to adapt to rapidly changing political and economic conditions. Trade and economic depression followed the conclusion of the war in 1760. These circumstances were exacerbated by the

¹⁴⁶ John Duncan wrote a letter of introduction to Sir William Johnson on March 12th 1766, introducing Alexander Ellice, "who from his Integrity and knowledge of business.....has induced me to take him A Partner in....thereby reap the Benefit of his labour." Sir William Johnson Papers, Vol. 70. Of note, Ellice and Phyn both join St. Patrick's Masonic Lodge.

¹⁴⁷ *The Porteous Papers* in the collection at the Buffalo Historical Society have a great deal of information on the business activities of Phyn, Ellice and Company. Given the current inaccessibility of the collection, sections of primary source letters and documents have been used where they could be found. *The Letter Books of Phyn and Ellice of Schenectady* consist of three volumes bound in deerskin that are in the collections of the Buffalo Historical Society. Records in the books cover the years from 1767-1776. In conjunction with the *Porteous Papers* provide a detailed history of their business activities during this period. While the collection remains largely unpublished, certain sections have been published in the Buffalo Republic, 1851 March 7, 8, 15, April 22, May 22, 24 and in the *Burton Historical Collection Leaflet*, II, No. 22-6.

policies adopted by Grenville in the Trade Acts of 1764. The Stamp Act of 1765 created a huge political backlash leading to the first non-importation agreement signed by New York merchants on October 31, 1765. This act led to the Townshend Act of 1767 and onto the Revolution. These acts and the political fighting that ensued caused arguments about taxation, reform, customs, duties, etc. All of this negatively impacted fur trading firms such as Phyn and Ellice, disrupting their shipping routes, bills of credit and overall commerce. Firms that could leverage their contacts and networks had a crucial advantage that allowed them not only to survive but to prosper.

Under these trying conditions, Phyn and Ellice diversified their business interests and engaged in various trade and purchasing functions. Their representatives at outlying posts began to focus on furnishing the middlemen with goods and liquors. In addition, they began to sell considerable quantities of goods to friend and fellow Freemason, Sir William Johnson, the Superintendent of the Indian Department. These goods were used as presents to maintain status, keep the peace, and purchase land.¹⁴⁸ Government officials at various forts purchased merchandise from the firm. By contracting through Sir William and engaging in government business, the firm was able to establish positive relations with Alexander Grant, who was in command of naval activity on the Great Lakes at the time. He was in control of the shipping and logistics on the lakes.¹⁴⁹ Returns for government trade were not always in furs, but often in

¹⁴⁸ *Sir William Johnson Papers*, VI 403, 496-7, 615.

¹⁴⁹ Shipping costs on the lakes could be high. Early on the British government had given monopoly contracts to men such as John Stedman, who controlled shipping at the Niagara road portage. Stedman and those who followed him had a contract to prioritize the shipment of government and military supplies. This could cause long and costly delays to traders. Phyn and Ellice were able to work with fellow Mason, Sir William Johnson, to contact and ship government items and hence be given priority placement at the portage. For descriptions of these routes, see *Sir William Johnson Papers*, VII, 723-6.

remittances from military and government officers as well as bills of exchange on various government agencies and departments. These reduced shipping costs, increased priority and were more readily turned into cash in London or New York.¹⁵⁰

By the autumn of 1768, these new trade agreements had shown to be extremely profitable and beneficial to the firm, so much so that Robert Ellice, the younger brother of Alexander, was added to the firm. In addition, a larger headquarters was needed; “Bachelor’s Hall” was left for more suitable accommodations. James Phyn moved with his new bride, the daughter of Dr. John Constable, a fellow mason, member of Saint Patrick’s Lodge and good friend of Sir William.¹⁵¹

To cope with rising transportation costs and increased competition from merchants in Montreal, an agreement was reached between the firm of Phyn and Ellice and Samuel Tymes, Daniel Campbell, John Porteous and James Sterling to build the *Angelica*, a sloop of forty or fifty tons in Detroit, in 1769. Porteous had already been an agent who worked with Phyn and Ellice and Daniel Campbell was a Brother Mason in Saint Patrick’s Lodge. This boat would allow the firm to control its shipping cost and times, avoiding government agents, as well as allow them to offset shipping costs by selling extra space on the sloop to other traders. This new arrangement worked well, allowing the firm to better compete with the St. Lawrence shipping route to Montreal.

¹⁵⁰ R.H. Fleming. “Phyn, Ellice and Company of Schenectady.” *Contributions to Canadian Economics*, 4 (1932), 13-14.

¹⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 14.

David Campbell appears to have been a member of Saint Patrick's Lodge, but in any case was a mason as early as 1754. On June 28th, 1754, David Campbell sent a letter to his friend and Masonic Brother, George Washington, who had become a Master Mason in Fredericksburg Lodge, Virginia in 1753. It seems that David Campbell may have been a member of the same lodge. In the letter, Campbell mentions "the fruits of your Victory over the French, the Sight of whom gave me & your other friends such satisfaction as is only felt by those who have hearts full of Mutual affection & friendship.....(regarding lodge business, Campbell says) On the first Saturday of this month (Our Lodge Day) Coln. John Thorton was unanimously voted to the Chair, as was Dr. Halkerson to the Senior Wardenship & Mr Wm McWilliams to the Junior...."¹⁵² Over the next several years, Campbell traded and supplied goods to the Indian Department via his Masonic connection with Sir William and appears to have joined the lodge founded by Sir William as well.

Compared to other fur trading firms centered on the Mohawk Valley, the Schenectady-based firm Phyn and Ellice operated the farthest reaching and most efficient trading operation of its time. The firm had a network of business connections in British and colonial port cities, such as New York, Albany, Glasgow, and London, and reached west along the Great Lakes in Niagara, Montreal, Detroit and Mackinaw.¹⁵³ Trusted contacts and adaptability were the keys to survival in this environment. For example, when goods could not be had at prices the firm thought reasonable, they started buying goods from William and Alexander Forsyth of Huntley,

¹⁵² Daniel Campbell to George Washington, 28 June 1754. Founders Online assessed at: <https://founders.archives.gov/documents/Washington/02-01-02-0073>

¹⁵³ Nolan M. Cool. "Pelts and Prosperity: The Fur Trade and the Mohawk Valley, 1730-1776. *New York History*, Vol 97, (2016), 144.

Aberdeenshire, to be shipped from Glasgow, Scotland. They must have had cordial relations. In a letter dated December 25th, 1769, an inquiry was made by Phyn and Ellice asking: “when will you send us over a few of your boys or don’t you choose they should become Americans?” Family records suggest that the family had at least nine sons, some of whom must have come over as the Forsyths from this family became prominent traders in Detroit, Niagara Falls, Kingston, and Montreal.¹⁵⁴ When prices became too high in Glasgow, arrangements were made to purchase goods from Neale and Pigou of London.¹⁵⁵

Masons also relied on each other at times in order to establish new markets, networks and to circumvent local laws. In the years leading up to the American Revolution revenue acts, non-importation acts, the Townshend Acts all had a negative effect on the fur trade and transatlantic shipping.¹⁵⁶ In New York, the non-importation agreement signed on August 27, 1768 included provisions including: not to import any more goods, with certain exceptions, from Great Britain directly, until the duties were repealed. After this agreement was signed by New York and Albany merchants, Phyn and Ellice had to act quickly. Their fur trade was heavily dependent on manufactured goods being shipped from London and the seasonal nature of

¹⁵⁴ R.H. Fleming. “Phyn, Ellice and Company of Schenectady.” *Contributions to Canadian Economics*, 4 (1932), 16. It is not known if William or Alexander Forsyth of Scotland were Masons. It is highly likely that they were, or at least had a favorable impression of the fraternity; of their sons who come to North America, George, James, John and Joseph are all listed as prominent Masons in Canada. See John Ross Robertson. *The History of Freemasonry in Canada, From Its Introduction in 1749*. (Toronto: George N. Morang and CO Ltd, 1900).

¹⁵⁵ Masonic records in the United Kingdom, while preserved are not in an easy to access or acquire electronic or in bound compilation of primary source material. One needs to go to the archives and look through the membership rolls to ascertain membership. Sadly, at the moment the relevant research collections are not accessible and there is no indication as to when one will be able to look at these materials.
<https://museumfreemasonry.org.uk/>

¹⁵⁶ To see how the struggles for power were playing out in New York, see, Gary B. Nash. *The Urban Crucible, The Northern Seaports and the Origins of the American Revolution*. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1986), 233-238.

shipping routes only allowed for importing and exporting at certain times of the year. In order to continue to do business the firm determined that: “we must try to get our goods over by way of Quebec.” In a letter sent to their agent in New York prior to his sailing to London, he was instructed: “If the Revenue Acts are not repealed we will lose customers who will deal with the Merchants of Canada to prevent we must desire all our order may be shipped to Quebeck excepting the nails and such articles as are exempted in the prohibition made by the Merchants of New York.”¹⁵⁷

The firm was trying to conduct business while complying with local laws. They were still permitted to import certain items to New York, and did so; however, items vital to the fur trade, which might not be considered essential to merchants in New York, were needed on the frontier. In order to remain competitive, the firm had to resort to “work-arounds.” Given communication of the time, this was not always possible; as an example, one of their critical shipments arrived in New York after the non-importation agreements had been signed.

When a ship arrived in New York carrying now-illegal goods, the firm needed to explain its actions and perhaps call in a favor. Daniel Campbell drafted a letter to the Sons of Liberty, dated 14 Nov 1769. In an effort to get around the embargo, he stated that the “Goods were order’d out after the Agreement took place” and that he and his firm shall, “always find me ready to join in Every agreement wherein its Judg’d for the Good of this Country.” Campbell mentions that the items are Indian goods which if not allowed through, “the Merchts. In Canada will take the Advantage of us and import double the Quantity by which means our

¹⁵⁷ R.H. Fleming. “Phyn, Ellice and Company of Schenectady.” *Contributions to Canadian Economics*, 4 (1932), 18.

Traders that go up among the Indians will be Oblig'd to go there to buy their Goods & we shall Lose the whole of the Indian Trade."

Somewhere during the discussion about releasing the goods, the captain of the ship and a friend of the firm, a Mr. Blackburn mentioned that the good were for Sir William Johnson, apparently in hope that using his name might carry some weight. Campbell in his letter points out that he is "extremely sorry that there shoud by any misunder(standing) concerning this Report. I know perfectly well I never made use of (Sir William's) name to Mr. Blackburn in my Life in no manner...." Campbell states that while Sir William has need of the goods, he would not break the embargo imposed by the "Gentlemen of New York." As a final point, Campbell stresses that he "never Mentioned any affair to Sir William Johnson in regard of making use of his name with any View of getting Indian Goods imported from England under his name."¹⁵⁸ Through a combination of naming an important person who needed the goods, while denying that the same person had any knowledge of what was transpiring, provided some polite leverage to hopefully allow the goods to proceed.

It is not known which Sons of Liberty received the letter. Daniel Campbell as a well-known Mason in both Saint Patrick's Lodge founded by Sir William Johnson, and Fredericksburg Lodge may have hoped that some of the prominent Sons of Liberty in New York, such as Isaac Sears or Haymon Salomon, who were fellow Freemasons, might lend a sympathetic ear. Salomon was initiated into Freemasonry in Philadelphia's Lodge No. 2 in 1764, and, while Sears

¹⁵⁸ *Sir William Johnson Papers*, VII, 251-2.

was a well-known Mason, it is not known where he was initiated.¹⁵⁹ Campbell stated that the goods were shipped before the agreement and thus should not be forced to abide by it. His letter also suggests that if the good were released and allowed to be shipped back, he would be fine with that. Lastly, he seems to suggest that many of the goods were needed by Sir William for the Indian Department. Campbell it seems as a last resort is implying that fellow Mason, Sir William, an important official, needs these items, and that Campbell would never use Sir Williams name to force the issue, not directly, at least. The final passage of the letter looks a little like a “do you know who I am” method of trying to get his items released.¹⁶⁰

While it is not known how the letter was received, the shipment was allowed to leave New York, where it arrived in Quebec on May 30th, 1770. While the shipment was being held up in New York, James Phyn used his connections to obtain a trader’s license, which was granted on July 5th 1770 and confirmed in Montreal on July 9th. This license allowed for the shipping of goods to Detroit.¹⁶¹ Alexander Ellice and John Porteous were waiting at Detroit to

¹⁵⁹ Isaac Sears was born in Harwich, Massachusetts in 1730 and later moved to Norwalk, Connecticut. He served as a privateer during the Seven Years War and later moved to New York. It is possible that he became a Mason in one of the military lodges discussed in the previous chapter or in a New York lodge that’s records did not survive the British occupation of the city. Regardless of where he was made a Mason, it is clear that he was regarded as a Freemason during his adult life.

¹⁶⁰ On May 17th, 1777, the Schenectady Committee of Correspondence resolved that certain persons were looked upon as dangerous. The name, Daniel Campbell was at the top of the list. Campbell it seems, placed his business and possible Masonic connections as a priority over the various acts and initiatives undertaken by the colonies. The firm will relocate to Montreal prior to the Revolution, not necessarily because they are loyalist, but that they see the colonies making business impossible to conduct. See: Minutes of the Albany Committee of Correspondence, Schenectady Committee, 2:1099, State University of New York as mentioned in *Sir William Johnson papers*, VII, 251.

¹⁶¹ The license for this shipment is for 2600lbs. gunpowder, 50 cwt. Ball and shot and 188 packages of goods valued at £6000 to be shipped by “Grant’s” vessels to Detroit. See: *Canadian Archives, Indian Trade Licenses*.

take possession of the items and prepare them for further distribution to Mackinaw and other western outposts.

Even after the repeal of the non-importation agreements, the firm expanded its network to Montreal and Quebec. By 1770, Phyn and Ellice had licenses to trade from two Canadian Ports not subject to non-importation. In addition, increasing competition from traders via the Saint Lawrence made working from Canada a stronger necessity.¹⁶² In addition, reports from fellow Freemason, Benjamin Roberts writing from London on April 13th, 1770 states: “the Qubekers have carried Out vast Quantitys of goods £70,000 str & upwards to Montreal alone besides what are Charterd for Quebeck its imagined about 150,000 worth of goods in all.”¹⁶³

The firm of Phyn, Ellice and Company finally dissolved on April 1st, 1790. Political and economic uncertainty caused by the American Revolution and its aftermath created an unstable fur trade environment for years. It would take the end of the War of 1812 and John Jacob Astor to establish a controlling monopoly of trade, until then traders and merchants, such as Phyn and Ellice, who conducted business in the Great Lakes region would have to rely on contacts and personal connections. From their base in Schenectady, they had Masonic Brothers Daniel Campbell in Albany, Hayman Levy in New York, John Askin at Michilimackinac, Sir William Johnson in Johnstown, New York, several potential Masonic connections in London and Glasgow, Richard Pollard in Detroit and Quebec and many others. In this environment efforts were made through agents, contact, friends and Masonic Brothers, to gain access to markets

¹⁶² Nolan M. Cool. “Pelts and Prosperity.” Vol. 97 *New York History* (2016), 145.

¹⁶³ *Sir William Johnson Papers*, VII, 540.

and privileges that were a foundation of the British colonial patronage system of control and governance in the colonies. In this business climate there was little legal authority to regulate trade or set business regulations, and what laws were in place could be hard to enforce. Laws did exist to allow for the redress of grievances and of course people did bring lawsuits against each other, but even if one succeeded, it was almost impossible to collect debts in the frontier. For example, after an agreement between Phyn, Ellice and John Porteous was dissolved, it was agreed that Porteous would still stay on for another year to try to help collect debts owed. A letter to John states: "In consideration of your agreeing to stay at this place one year less or more in collect and gather in the debts of Phyn, Ellice....." As a result of these conditions, trusted partners were needed, and representatives or correspondents were selected at all the strategic points along the lakes and logistical trade routes. The greatest care had to be made in selecting these people as one's business and livelihood depended on it.¹⁶⁴ By selecting fellow masons, with all others things being equal, it did provide another level of assurance that, beyond just being in business together, each Mason had taken an obligation both to be fair in all dealings with another Brother and to assist him whenever possible. Phyn, Ellice and many others were part of Sir William Johnson's affinity circle. His son, Sir John Johnson continued his father's work in business and politics as well as expanding the Masonic network throughout the fur trading Great Lakes region.

Sir John Johnson was born on November 5th, 1741 in Amsterdam, New York. John's father, Sir William Johnson, as noted was already a wealthy landowner and Superintendent of

¹⁶⁴ R.H. Fleming. "Phyn, Ellice and Company of Schenectady." *Contributions to Canadian Economics*, 4 (1932), 22-24.

Indian Affairs and who by all accounts respected and tried to work with the Native Americans in a fair and equitable way. John Johnson growing up on the frontier daily saw the cannon and guard on the lookout towers of Fort Johnson and the coming and going of various church, military, government officials, as well as numerous Indian chiefs and tribal representatives. Growing up, many of his playmates were Indian children.¹⁶⁵ As such, he was groomed to assume his father's duties in both a military and diplomatic capacity. At his father's funeral, governors, judges and the high officials of the land came to pay their respects to Sir William, who had keep the borders free from attack and the Mohawks and their allies as friends of their chief Warragheguway "The Uniter of Peoples." As a testament to his abilities, great leaders of the Six Nations laid several wampum belts in order on the tomb and delivered a eulogy of their dead brother.¹⁶⁶

John Johnson was sent on his "Grand Tour of Britain" from 1765-1767. This was done for many reasons, chief of which to his father was the petition of Sir William to the Crown for 80,000 acres along the Mohawk, between the East and West Canada Creeks, which had been given to him by the Mohawks for service to the Six Nations. John visited with officials and pressed for the confirmation of the grant. The trip was a way to introduce the young John to the key officials and leaders in British society and to establish his future in the colonies. Mr. George Croghan, deputy of Sir William, sent John a letter regarding what to expect on his tour:

You will See in London Some of the Best Company in the World & Likewise Some of the Worst, with the advantidges you go there and your own Good Sense and prudence you

¹⁶⁵ P.H. Bryce. "Sir John Johnson: Baronet; Superintendent-General of Indian Affairs." *The Quarterly Journal of the New York State Historical Association*. Vol 9 (1928), 234.

¹⁶⁶ Ibid., 239. Note other translations for the name suggest it meant "man who does a lot of business." Regardless of the translation, Sir William had earned the respect of both his nation and the Six Nations, a mantle his son had been prepared to assume.

will Need No advise from Me for yr Conduct, Indeed from the Greatt Regard I have for Sir William and family and My Anxious Desier for your Prosperity I Cound Wish itt was in My Power to Give you any, that you Could Benifitt by, I Must Take the Liberty to Remind you that from the Aimable Carrector of the Late Sir Peter Warran & your father and the Emenient Service that have Rendred to thire King & Cuntry you will have the Eeys of Ye best people in England fixed on you, therefore there will be More Expected from you then phaps from any young Gentleman that Ever Left Amarrica.¹⁶⁷

Shortly after arriving in London, he was knighted in his own right. His letter to his father and others carried the news: "I was presented to the King Who received my very Graciously and knighted me. I have likewise had the honor to Kiss her Majesty's hand & the Duke of Yorks who was very Gracious and asked me many questions."¹⁶⁸ The knighting of John Johnson caused a stir back home, and rumors ran with talks of John Johnson being made the governor of Detroit or perhaps, Illinois and that Sir William was to receive the Order of the Bath or perhaps be made a peer.¹⁶⁹ The rumor and talk was mostly just that, but given that the gossip was all in a positive light suggests that the Johnsons were held in high favor. Regarding Sir John's knighting, it does seem to have cleared up a cloud over Sir William's head. While Sir William was knighted and given a hereditary baronet, there was some concern of legitimacy regarding John. John was the son of William and his common law wife, Catherine Weissenberg. The issue of a hereditary title being passed down was put to rest when Sir John was knighted in his own right. His friend Claus wrote regarding doubts: "Whatever is conducive to Your Honor and Interest is the same to your Sister & so to me and the benefit your Sister reaped on this

¹⁶⁷ Sir William Johnson Papers, 11: 964-965.

¹⁶⁸ Milton W. Hamilton. "An American Knight in Britain; Sir John Johnson's Tour, 1765-1767. Vol 42. *New York History* (April 1961), 123.

¹⁶⁹ Sir William Johnson Papers, 5: 62, 107, 475.

Occasion in Clearing up to the world a certain point must be as evident to you as it is to her and me and we cannot sufficiently rejoice and thank God for it.”¹⁷⁰

While on his tour Sir John became accustomed to interacting with the upper levels of British society. His being well received at court allowed him to establish contacts with many prominent people, extending his network. A letter from Lord Adam Gordon on January 10th, 1767, to Sir William states: “I desire then, to assure you, that every Body, who has seen Your Son, is pleased much with him; and desirous of being better acquainted, with Him.” Regarding his ability to interact with British society, “He is greatly changed for the better, in point of Address, and Conversation.” Lord Gordon goes on to say that spending another year or two in Europe, if Sir John would apply himself to acquiring useful skills would, “render him usefull to his own Country, when he returns to it – and an Honour to his family.”¹⁷¹

Along with talks of offices and appointments, Sir John Johnson, while in England, was given Masonic Honors. This was done at the same time that Sir William, Guy Johnson, and Daniel Claus were forming St. Patrick’s Lodge in New York. Sir John Johnson was initiated into the Royal Lodge, St. James Street, London,¹⁷² and upon his return to New York made a member

¹⁷⁰ Milton W. Hamilton. “An American Knight in Britain; Sir John Johnson’s Tour, 1765-1767. Vol 42. *New York History* (April 1961), 124.

¹⁷¹ Sir William Johnson Papers. 12: 248-252.

¹⁷² There can be little doubt that many of Sir John Johnson’s contacts in England belonged to Masonic Lodges, unfortunately Freemasons in the UK have not digitized their records to the extent that Lodges in the United States have. The Lodge where Sir John was initiated is still in operation today as Mark Mason’s Hall and is listed as a Crown property and one that administers several Masonic bodies. In addition, many Masonic records are housed at the Museum of Freemasonry. Both of these organizations are not open at the moment due to COVID restrictions. See: <https://museumfreemasonry.org.uk/> and <https://www.markmasonshall.org/> respectively.

of Saint Patrick's Lodge.¹⁷³ Lastly, in what must have been a mark of high esteem and thoughts of a promising future, both as a Mason and government official, Sir John received a deputation issued to him from Lord Blaney, Grand Master of England, in 1767, making Sir John Johnson the Provincial Grand Master of Masons for New York.¹⁷⁴

Sir John arrived home in October of 1767 as noted in the *Mercury*. His visit had been a success with the award of new honors and the establishment of new connections. Sir John at that point seemed content to settle into the duties associated with his new station. For example, a letter from Issac Vrooman and 13 others to Sir William of the "eminent services which Sir John has given in aiding in the elections of Jacobus Mynderse to represent Schenectady in the Legislature." Another example is the letter from Sir William to Lord Shelburne thanking him for the "notice with which Your Lordship honored my son when in England, and for the many other marks of Your Lordship's favour and patronage."¹⁷⁵ Sir John's training and background prepared him for a peaceful life as a country gentlemen and official of the Crown. He would assume his father's title and position of Superintendent of Indian Affairs by the time of Sir William's death on July 11th, 1774. Sir John was a wealthy, titled, landowner in his own right.

¹⁷³ Minutes of St. Patrick's Lodge, 1766-74. Johnstown, New York.

¹⁷⁴ Ossian Lang, *History of Freemasonry in the State of New York, Trials, Tribulations and Success*. (Washington, D.C.: Westphalia Press, 2015), 32-33. Technically he would be considered the Provincial Grand Master of the colonies of New York, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania. Also of note, he would be the last Provincial Grand Master as the Revolutionary War would reshape Freemasonry in the new United States nation.

¹⁷⁵ P.H. Bryce. "Sir John Johnson: Baronet; Superintendent-General of Indian Affairs." *The Quarterly Journal of the New York State Historical Association*. Vol 9 (July 1928), 237.

It is hard to know Sir John's politics in the years before his tour of England; however, while in England, he had become an ardent Tory. He resented the actions of his fellow colonists in their opposition to the Stamp Act. He spoke out against their leaders and hoped that the crown would take strong steps to stop them. Given his family history and how they had owed their advancement and position to the crown and aristocratic patronage, it should not be a surprise that Sir John, while wanting to remain out of the coming fight, was prepared to become in word and deed a Loyalist. Another factor in his decisions may be the value he placed on oaths and obligations. The Revolutionary War would alter the face of Masonry in the United States in many ways. The conflict between the ancients and moderns, as discussed in chapter one, was put to rest and notions of how Masonry would fit into the new republic were being discussed. While many of the founding fathers, continental army officers and signers of the Declaration of Independence were Masons, many masons chose to remain loyal to England.

The district where Sir John Johnson lived, Tryon, showed its loyalty to the crown in 1775 by drawing up an oath, today on display in the VanAlstyne House in Canajoharie. It reads: "I, A.B., do sincerely promise and swear that I will be faithful and bear true Allegiance to His Majesty King George the Third, so help me God. I, A.B., do swear that I do from my Heart abhor, detest and abjure as impious and Heretical that damnable Doctrine and Position, that Princes excommunicated or deprived by the Power or any other authority of the See of Rome, may be deposed or murdered by their Subjects or any other whatsoever." There are more than 100 signatures on the document, more than half of which in three years would take up arms as rebels against their King as well as against those whose position, wealth, and sense of

duty chose to remain true to their oath.¹⁷⁶ This was done in opposition to the actions of the first continental congress. In Tryon, the Johnsons led the opposition to the measure and had the document drawn up by the grand jury. It was signed by most of the grand jurors and nearly all the magistrates.¹⁷⁷

As the war approached, Sir John tried to remain neutral at Johnson Hall. Of course he received correspondence and was kept abreast of events. He maintained contact with the Governor at Montreal and was closely watched by the patriots in his district. Prominent merchants were kept under surveillance. Friends and Masonic Brothers, Daniel Campbell and Alexander Ellice, were summoned before the Committee of Safety at Schenectady on August 5th, 1775 to learn about their leanings and sentiments. They stated that they intended to go to Niagara and Montreal on trading business, and would carry no improper documents to the enemy. They were granted certificates to travel and hereafter would be known as Ellice Phyn & Co., doing business in Montreal. Likewise Sir John received a tip that Elisha Dayton was ordered by General Schuyler to arrest him. Sir John fled New York and arrived in Montreal on July 6th and immediately reported to Sir Guy Carleton with the intent of taking up new duties as an officer raising troops for the English cause.¹⁷⁸

When Sir John fled his estate, he buried some family papers, silver plate and other valuables. It is likely that he also buried the officer jewels of Saint Patrick's Lodge at that time. During the war, he was leading a raid and scouting expedition into the Mohawk valley on May

¹⁷⁶ Ibid., 240.

¹⁷⁷ Mabel Gregory Walker. "Sir John Johnson" *The Mississippi Valley Historical Review*. Vol 3. (December 1916), 321.

¹⁷⁸ P.H. Bryce. "Sir John Johnson: Baronet; Superintendent-General of Indian Affairs." *The Quarterly Journal of the New York State Historical Association*. Vol 9 (July, 1928), 243-244.

9th, 1780 and used the opportunity to bring away 143 wives and families of his Highlanders, men who had fled with him and were fighting on the loyalist side, as well as the buried papers and other belongings.¹⁷⁹ Sadly, many of the papers at the time had been destroyed, leaving gaps in the documentary record of Sir John. The papers were reported to be deeds, rent rolls, legal documents and things of that nature. By the end of the war, his property and family estates were seized by the government of New York. He lost everything and was vilified by many of his former friends and associates. Yet, he had enough respect for masonry that on June 3, 1831, Sir John returned to the Lodge the old Provincial Warrant, together with the jewels, mostly of silver which had been presented to the Lodge by his father, Sir William Johnson. Because of this, Saint Patrick's Lodge has its complete records and warrants going back to 1766. The officer's jewels are still in use today.¹⁸⁰

During the war, Sir John Johnson, along with his Guy Johnson, nephew of Sir William, together with Chief Joseph Brant, and the Tory leaders, Colonial John Butler, and Colonial Walter Butler, all of whom were Freemasons, led the Loyalist resistance in Northwest New York. Johnson's raids, along with his Indian allies under Brant in the Mohawk Valley caused Johnson to be despised by the colonial rebels. Joseph Brant, who was discussed in the previous chapter, used his and Johnson's influence to bring the Iroquois into the fight. They succeeded in bringing four of the tribes, the Mohawks, Onondagas, Cayugas, and Senecas into an alliance with England. The Oneidas and Tuscaroras sided with the colonists. At the conclusion of the

¹⁷⁹ Ibid., 246-247.

¹⁸⁰ Ossian Lang, *History of Freemasonry in the State of New York, Trials, Tribulations, and Success*. (Washington, D.C.: Westphalia Press, 2015), 44.

war and the signing of the Treaty of Paris, Johnson and thousands of others were permanently exiled in Canada.

The Revolutionary War altered the political landscape in the Great Lakes region forever. While the full effect of these changes took decades to unfold, Masons and their networks, in the fur trade, political connections, etc., were adjusting to a fluid environment that would not ultimately be settled until after the War of 1812. Throughout the American Revolution, the fur trade faced serious challenges. As previously noted, Michilimackinac was a fur trade center and in many ways the epicenter of the Middle Ground. The fur trade linked diverse collections of peoples together from the western Great Lakes, south to the Missouri territory, east to Detroit, Montreal, Quebec, and New York and across the Atlantic. Indian, metis, and French-Canadian families depended on a stable trade environment to make their livings; British and French-Canadian traders, while rivals, had to have peaceful relations with each other and the Indian nations for their business to survive. The British crown sought to govern these diverse peoples in a cost effective way and needed a healthy trade, gift giving, and patronage in order to instill loyalty to the crown. Beyond a simple trade network, this activity encompassed a complex web of social, political, and economic contacts, among both individuals and groups of people. The Revolutionary War, while disruptive, did not completely shut down the fur trade.¹⁸¹ Places and people had to adapt to changing circumstances.

When the Americans entrenched at Montreal, fur merchants had no idea what to do. The seasonal nature of the trade meant that they had to dispatch canoes loaded with trade

¹⁸¹ Keith R. Widder. "Effects of the American Revolution on Fur-Trade Society at Michilimackinac," in *The Fur Trade Revisited, Selected Papers of the Sixth North American Fur Trade Conference, Mackinac Island, Michigan, 1991*. Jennifer S.H. Brown, W.J. Eccles, and Donald P. Heldman, ed (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 1994), 299-302.

items bound for Michilimackinac as soon as the winter ice receded. If the boats were not sent, traders would lose their business and possibly go bankrupt. Moreover, the Indians could starve as their livelihood was dependent on trade merchandise. In a possible worst-case scenario, the Indians could turn on and attack the settlements out of desperation. These attacks could push from Mackinaw south to Detroit.¹⁸²

Detroit was already feeling the strain of the war. Supplies were running low and inflation was rampant. In a letter dated March 24th, 1779 it was reported that: "Detroit is capable in peaceable times to supply the Garrison with Provisions, but at this time the inhabitants are so much employed in Conveys & probably will continue so that they have not been able to thrash last year's corn, and the great number of cattle furnished for Governor Hamilton's Expedition as well as for Detroit with what have been consumed by Indians have reduced the numbers so much that a pair of oxen cannot be purchased for less than 1,000 Livers & and then reckoned a cheap bargain....Flour in 60 Livers a hundred & every article very dear."¹⁸³ Detroit, during the American Revolution "became the mecca for loyalists and opportunists fleeing from the rebellious American colonies." Many of these people were British merchants who would become leaders in the community and ultimately move across the Detroit River in to Canada when the final treaties were signed.¹⁸⁴ Lastly, merchants, traders, officials all had to maintain their business practices while keeping abreast of the ongoing war. Many of these people found themselves in a tough dilemma. Cooperate with the rebels and

¹⁸² David A. Armour & Keith R. Widder, *At the Crossroads, Michilimackinac During the American Revolution*. (Lansing, Mackinac State Historic Parks: John Henry, Co., 1986), 52.

¹⁸³ Letters of Mason Bolton to Gen. Haldimand. *Michigan Pioneer Historical Collections*, Vol. 9, 427-429.

¹⁸⁴ Catherine Cangany, *Frontier Seaport, Detroit's Transformation into an Atlantic Entrepôt*. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2014), 30-31.

have to answer to the crown later, or remain a loyalist and if the rebels won, you could lose everything. For example, Sir John Johnson was attainted in 1779 by an act of the New York legislature and all his property, real and personal was confiscated.

With the Revolutionary War concluded, the terms of the peace made the Great Lakes the northern boundary of the United States. When the articles of peace were presented before Parliament on February 17, 1783, it caused uproar, so much so that the Earl of Carlisle shouted, "All Canada is in fact lost to Great-Britain. All the country, from the Alegany Mountains to the Mississippi lost." Beyond the land that was lost, "The peltry and fur trade lost....together with three principal forts of Niagara, Michillimackinac, and Detroit, which last, I understand, has 10,000 inhabitants around it."¹⁸⁵ In addition, over twenty-five Native American tribes and nations would now ally themselves with the United States.

In the years following the Revolutionary War, masons in the Great Lakes region rebuilt their lives and livelihoods, often relying on their Masonic connections and network. For example, in March of 1792, Sir John received a commission from King George the Third, "To our Trusty and well beloved Sir John Johnson Bart. Greeting. We reposing especial trust and confidence in your Loyalty, Fidelity, and Ability do, by these presents, constitute and appoint you to be Superintendant General and Inspector General of our Faithful Subjects and Allies the Six United Nations of Indians and their Confederates..."¹⁸⁶ In addition, Sir John, in 1788

¹⁸⁵ *The Parliamentary History of England From the Earliest Period to the Year 1803. From Which Last-Mentioned Epoch it is Continued Downwards in the Work Entitled, "The Parliamentary Debates" VOL. XXIII. Comprising the Period From the Tenth of May 1782, to the First of December 1783.* (London: Printed By T.C. Hansard, Peterborough-Court, Fleet-Street: For Longman, Hurst, Rees, Orme & Brown; J.M. Richardson; Black, Parry, & Co.; J. Hatchard; J. Ridgway; E. Jeffrey; Calkin: J. Booth; and T.C. Hansard. 1814), 377.

¹⁸⁶ Commission to Sir John Johnson by George the Third. *Michigan Pioneer Historical Collections*, Vol. 24, pp. 327.

succeeded Brother Christopher Carlton and was appointed Provincial Grand Master of Masons for Quebec. His appointment was from the acting Grand Master of England.¹⁸⁷ After the war, Sir John settled in Montreal and spent a great deal of his time resettling displaced loyalists and working with the Six Nations, including Masonic Brother Joseph Brant in getting compensation and lands for the tribes.¹⁸⁸

Sir John worked with John Graves Simcoe, a fellow mason, who was initiated into masonry in Union Lodge, Exeter on November 2nd, 1773. He became the first Lieutenant Governor of Upper Canada in 1791 with the passing of the Constitution Act of 1791. This act created an Upper and Lower Canada. Simcoe founded York, now Toronto, and focused his efforts on the implementation of an English system of government as opposed to the French influence of Lower Canada. To that end, Simcoe worked to settle displaced loyalists and implement English common law, freehold land tenure and trial by juries. While he had pro-aristocratic leanings, he also embraced Enlightenment and Masonic ideas of equality and oversaw the abolition of slavery in Canada. Simcoe stated: "The principals of the British Constitution do not admit of that slavery which Christianity condemns. The moment I assume the Government of Upper Canada under no modification will I assent to a law that discriminates by dishonest policy between natives of Africa, America, or Europe."¹⁸⁹

¹⁸⁷ John Ross Robertson, *The History of Freemasonry in Canada, From its Introduction in 1749, Compiled and Written From Official Records and From Mss. Covering the Period From 1749-1858, in the Possession of the Author, Volume 1, Part 1.* (Toronto: George N. Morang and Company, 1900), 174-175.

¹⁸⁸ For more information on Sir John's post war activities see: Mabel Gregory Walker. "Sir John Johnson" *The Mississippi Valley Historical Review*, Vol 3 (December, 1916), 318-346. And *Sir John Johnson*, by Earle Thomas, (Dundurn, 1986).

¹⁸⁹ John Graves Simcoe, Address to the Legislative Assembly: Early Canada Historical Narratives "An Act to Prevent the Further Introduction of Slaves."

Simcoe was also an active Freemason. On November 2nd, he was initiated into Union Lodge in Exeter.¹⁹⁰ Lieutenant Governor Simcoe made great use of Masonic buildings for official government functions and in doing so demonstrated the role of Freemasonry in shaping colonial society and networks. In September 1792, in an effort to impress elected and appointed representatives, settlers, Native Americans, soldiers and officers, he opened the legislature with all the pomp he could muster at Freemasons' Hall. In addition to legislative measure, Simcoe used Freemasons' Hall as a court house, Indian Council House and hall for the colonial government assembly. The use of a Masonic Hall for official government and ceremonial functions demonstrated the value of Masonry as well as the patronage, intellectual and social benefits that could be gained by membership.¹⁹¹

Robert Hamilton wielded a great deal of power and influence. This was mostly as a result of his being a key supplier to the British army. Hamilton established himself in Niagara around 1784 and the supply of the army and, to a lesser extent, the fur trade were his main business. The large garrison and strategic location of Niagara in conjunction with Hamilton's growing monopoly meant that he would claim the lion's share of the Niagara market, providing annually between 35 and 100 percent of the local military purchases, by value. The military's desire to deal with a limited number of contractors and to buy in bulk meant that Hamilton had

¹⁹⁰ *Union Lodge*. Minute Book (1766–1789). p113.

¹⁹¹ Jessica L. Harland-Jacobs, *Builders of Empire, Freemasonry and British Imperialism, 1717-1927*. (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2007), 54.

a wide economic moat around his business.¹⁹² He rose in power and became an influential politician and office holder.

His masonic connections aided his career. His masonic Record lists: Robert Hamilton became the Deputy Provincial Grand Master of the First Provincial Grand Lodge under R.W. Bro William Jarvis. He was a noted merchant of Niagara, a member of the Land Board in 1791, a member of the first Executive Council of the civil government in 1792, a judge of the district of Nassau and a prominent man in the affairs of Upper Canada.¹⁹³

Hamilton and Simcoe worked together on various issues and legislation, not always harmoniously. Simcoe, as the newly established provincial executive, was trying to establish regulations and centralize authority, while the merchant class was concerned about the economic ramifications of any additional measures, regarding control of the markets, transfers of land and claims of debts. Simcoe, like many of his 18th-century aristocratic military colleagues, was unaware of local concerns and conditions and was fighting against entrenched regional mercantile powers.

It seems that there was a little give and take between Simcoe and Hamilton. Regarding mercantile and land holding issues, Simcoe in one of his dispatches states that Hamilton is a “avowed republican” but later acknowledged that he had received a great deal of valuable

¹⁹² Bruce G. Wilson. “Hamilton, Robert,” in *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, vol. 5, University of Toronto/Université Laval, 2003–, accessed Augus3,2020. http://www.biographi.ca/en/bio/hamilton_robert_5E.html. For additional information about Robert Hamilton, see: Bruce G. Wilson. *Enterprises of Robert Hamilton: A Study of Wealth and Influence in Early Upper Canada, 1776-1812*. (Montreal: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1983).

¹⁹³ John Ross Robertson, *The History of Freemasonry in Canada, From its Introduction in 1749, Compiled and Written From Official Records and From Mss. Covering the Period From 1749-1858, in the Possession of the Author, Volume 1, Part 1*. (Toronto: George N. Morang and Company, 1900), 468.

information regarding the commerce of the country, particularly the Indian trade, from Mr. Hamilton.¹⁹⁴ Regarding the transfer of land, before 1796 land holding was based on certificates that gave possession but not necessarily ownership and right to alienate. Hamilton, as a large land speculator, had bought up many certificates and feared the government might not uphold their legality. In this matter, Governor Simcoe was sympathetic to Hamilton's concerns, just as Hamilton had worked with Simcoe regarding mercantile issues, such as monopolies, local courts, and land boards.¹⁹⁵ Simcoe came to acknowledge the legitimate concerns and influence of the merchants and placed Hamilton as Lieutenant of the county of Lincoln, the key office of the region. In this way, Simcoe had a Masonic brother in a key position who would use his influence with the various merchants to help keep the peace and resolve concerns. Lastly, Robert Hamilton became the Honorable Robert Hamilton, a member of the Executive Council under Lt. Governor Simcoe, and the Deputy Grand Master of the Provincial Grand Lodge¹⁹⁶

It is hard to know how much the two men liked or disliked each other. Perhaps the outward arguments were for public consumption for their respective constituents. An entry concerning Mr. Hamilton is found in Mrs. Simcoe's diary dated July 30th, 1792, at Niagara: "We stopped and breakfasted at Mr. Hamilton's, a merchant who lives two miles from here at the landing, where the cargoes going to Detroit are landed and sent 9 miles to Ft. Chippewa. Mr.

¹⁹⁴ Ibid., 468.

¹⁹⁵ Bruce G. Wilson. "Hamilton, Robert," in *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, vol. 5, University of Toronto/Université Laval, 2003—, accessed Augus3,2020. http://www.biographi.ca/en/bio/hamilton_robert_5E.html.

¹⁹⁶ John Ross Robertson, *The History of Freemasonry in Canada, From its Introduction in 1749, Compiled and Written From Official Records and From Mss. Covering the Period From 1749-1858, in the Possession of the Author, Volume 1, Part 1*. (Toronto: George N. Morang and Company, 1900), 360.

Hamilton has a very good stone house the back rooms looking on the river. A gallery, the length of the house, is a delightful covered walk, both below and above in all weather.”¹⁹⁷

Lastly, Lady Simcoe seems to have been a constant companion of Mrs. Hamilton. Given that, it does suggest that the Masonic patronage between Sir John Johnson, Mr. Robert Hamilton, and John Graves Simcoe worked to advance their respective careers, provide official appointments, award contracts, and when necessary argue with each other to reach an accord and appease constituents from their respective political and mercantile affinity circles.

Robert Hamilton married the daughter of John Askin, a powerful and wealthy merchant at Detroit. Hamilton and his partner Richard Cartwright, who was also a mason, had connections in Montreal, Niagara, and London, with masons, Phyn and Ellice, and in Detroit, through Askin. While the Revolutionary War and the subsequent Treaty of Paris of 1783 resolved political issues, with Britain formally acknowledging that the United States were free, sovereign, and independent, from a geographical and boundary standpoint; many issues remained unresolved. British, merchants in Montreal still controlled the fur trade. During the Revolutionary War, British loyalists fled New York and Albany to Montreal. They established military and trading posts in Mackinac, Oswego, Detroit, and Niagara. This effectively blocked for American traders the natural route of the Great Lakes to Oswego on Lake Ontario which connected by rivers to the Mohawk Valley, Albany and New York. Even after the Treaty of

¹⁹⁷ Ibid., 470.

1783, the British government refused to withdraw from these posts, and, the British actively excluded Americans from the fur trade.¹⁹⁸

It is easy to see why the British would not want to abandon their trading posts. The Canadian fur trade was one of the most profitable industries of 18th-century North America. For the ten years after the peace of 1783, the trade produced furs worth £200,000 sterling annually. Half of this came from United States territory to the south of the Great Lakes. This area was occupied by the British until Jay's Treaty of 1796, which determined that the British were occupiers in violation of Article II, and stipulated that American soil should be evacuated by British troops "with all convenient speed."¹⁹⁹ British troops withdrew from the Northwest Territory, opening up a vast area to American traders and enterprise. The Treaty created an advantage for American traders. Prior to the treaty, only a portion of the fur trade profits had come from American land, which the British were returning. Now all of Canada would be open to the enterprise of American Fur Traders.²⁰⁰ One man in particular, Masonic Brother John Jacob Astor saw the possibilities created by Jay's Treaty and leveraged his political, business, and Masonic connections to create a vast trading network.

John Jacob Astor was born on July 17th, 1763 in Walldorf, Germany. He was the youngest son of Johann Jacob Astor and Maria Magdalena vom Berg. In 1779, Astor

¹⁹⁸ John D. Haeger. "Business Strategy and Practice in the Early Republic: John Jacob Astor and the American Fur Trade." *Western Historical Quarterly*. Vol 19. (May, 1988), 184-185.

¹⁹⁹ Samuel Flagg Bemis. "Jay's Treaty and the Northwest Boundary Gap." *The American Historical Review*. Vol. 27 (April: 1922), 466.

²⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 478.

immigrated to London, when he was 16 to join his brother George working in their uncle's musical instrument manufacturing shop. It was in London that he learned English.²⁰¹

After the Revolutionary War, in 1783 or 1784, he immigrated to the United States, arriving in New York City. His plan had been to work with his brother Henry, who had a butcher shop in New York. However, a random encounter with a fur trader on his voyage from England to New York changed his plans and he entered the fur trade after working in the butcher shop for only a short time. Astor became one of the most prominent fur traders and businessmen in the United States. His interest initially focused on the Great Lakes region but eventually extended to the Pacific Ocean, Europe and China. Freemasonry played a large role in his connections and ability to establish and maintain business networks.

Astor, throughout all of his many business activities remained an active mason. W.J. Hugan, a Masonic historian in writing an 1888 history of Holland Lodge No. 16 (now No. 8), states: "On examining the minutes I have been surprised to see how regularly this wonderful man, whose enterprises were on a scale of grandeur which dwarfed all rivalry, attended the

²⁰¹ John Jacob Astor presents an image to both popular and professional historical literature that has changed drastically since his death. Astor's life has been portrayed as the quintessential rags to riches and pull yourself up by your bootstraps story to a real life American Scrooge, crook and profit above all "dog eat dog" capitalist. Logically historians have looked at him through the lenses of their own times and that is reflected in their various writings. For example, Astor's biography in *Hunt's Merchant Magazine in 1844*, shows a poor immigrant fleeing old world oppression and finds his fortune in America. This does set the tone for much future writing. The Whig politician, Horace Greeley writing in his *New York Tribune* praised Astor's hard work, but questioned his business dealing and profits from his sale of government bonds during the War of 1812. Many writers and historians have written about and commented on Astor and his business dealings. This study only seeks to look at his Masonic connections, which have not been examined, and is not intended as a commentary or judgment regarding any of his business practices. For a thorough examination of the historiography of John Jacob Astor, see John Denis Haeger, *John Jacob Astor, Business and Finance in the Early Republic*. (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1991), 15-38.

https://digital.library.wayne.edu/item/wayne:WayneStateUniversityPress4324/file/PDF_FULL

meetings of the Lodge and devoted himself to its interests.”²⁰² John Astor moved into various officer positions quite rapidly within the Fraternity. He was Master of Holland Lodge in 1788 and served as Grand Treasurer of the Grand Lodge of New York under Robert R. Livingston in 1798, 1799, and 1800.²⁰³

Men join the Freemasons for many reasons. Most never move through the chairs, that is, take on increasingly greater roles and responsibilities in running and governing a Lodge. John Astor moved up quickly. He had only arrived in New York in 1783 or 1784 and no records suggest that he had been a Mason prior to his arrival in New York. Astor must have quickly decided that he wanted to join a lodge and made some connections with masons, with whom he could meet and be recommended upon petitioning a lodge. The Lodge embracing its enlightenment principles and ideas of acceptance and equality welcomed the young German immigrant into its ranks. After becoming a Master Mason, he then quickly moved up through the chairs to become Master of the Lodge. In addition, he became a Grand Lodge Officer for three years. These positions require a great deal of time in the performance of their duties, and one does not hold a Masonic Office or advance without the vote and consent of the members of the Lodge. Clearly John Astor was performing all of his duties in a respectable manner. Moreover, this was not a reward to a high power, rich businessman as John Astor did not begin his fur trading business until after he was a Mason. At the time, he was a young merchant of some success who was probably comfortable if not well off, looking to expand and grow his business opportunities, like many other men in New York. Perhaps he looked upon the

²⁰² Peter Ross, *A Standard History of Freemasonry in the State of New York, Including Lodge, Chapter, Council, Commandery and Scottish Rite Bodies, Volume 1*. (New York: The Lewis Publishing Company, 1899), 176-177.

²⁰³ Ibid., 400.

fraternity as an opportunity to make business connections, as many have done. Perhaps some of the leading men in the community, who were Masons, took notice of young John Astor, who was establishing himself within the Freemasons, by demonstrating initiative and assisted him in business matters.

Regarding the potential to make connections through the Masonic fraternity, it is worth noting that Robert R. Livingston was one of the Committee of Five that drafted the Declaration of Independence. He served as Chancellor and as Grand Master of Freemasonry in New York and administered the oath of office to the first President of the United States and Masonic Brother, George Washington. On that occasion General Jacob Morton was marshal of the day. He was the Master of St. John's, and at the same time Grand Secretary of the Grand Lodge of New York. Having taken the oath, the awful suspense of the moment was broken by Chancellor Livingston, who solemnly said: "Long live George Washington, President of the United States." After which, Washington proceeded to the Senate Chamber and delivered his address to the Senate Chamber and delivered his address as Chief Magistrate of the Federal Union.²⁰⁴

This account is recorded in the records of the Grand Lodge of New York to illustrate that Washington's remarks and actions all involved and reflected the principals and teachings of Freemasonry. Moreover, there were concerns that accounts of the momentous inauguration would downplay Masonry's part, or give it no part in the proceedings at all. Most, if not all, the leaders on the balcony of Federal Hall were zealous Freemasons. John Astor, as the Grand Treasurer, may have been present at this event, and it certainly would have provided him the

²⁰⁴ Peter Ross, *A Standard History of Freemasonry in the State of New York, Including Lodge, Chapter, Council, Commandery and Scottish Rite Bodies, Volume 1*. (New York: The Lewis Publishing Company, 1899), 143.

opportunity to extend his Masonic connections and network. By the 1790's Astor was involved in the fur trade. From New York, he went to Canada and the Great Lakes Region to extend his business network. Astor came into contact with other traders and fellow Masons, such as Alexander Macomb²⁰⁵ and Phyn and Ellice, all Masons.

Alexander Macomb and his brother William left Albany for Detroit in 1765. They, along with David Edger, set up what would become one of Detroit's most successful merchant establishments. As their success grew, they were able to buy out competing merchant houses, such as the large Detroit division of Schenectady merchants Phyn and Ellice's company. Their financial power grew so large that in one purchase they were able to buy "12,132 deerskins, 9,483 raccoon, 413 bear, 682 cat and fox, 16 elk, and three wolf skins."²⁰⁶ Alexander Macomb was a Freemason and a Master of Zion Lodge under the Canadian warrant of 1764.²⁰⁷ He, along with other Detroit area Freemasons and merchants, such as James Abbott established and conducted business with other Freemasons in New York such as John Astor in a growing business and fur trading network.

Alexander Macomb had business and Masonic connections in New York. They very likely involved many of the same people. As mentioned, the Grand Master of Freemasonry in

²⁰⁵ It is not known when Alexander and his brother Henry Macomb became Freemasons. Records from the Detroit Lodge warranted from Canada records from 1794-1829 are incomplete. Existing records mention Brother General Macomb as Worshipful Master of Zion Lodge in 1818, but records of when he was initiated appear to have been lost. See: *150 Epic Years, Detroit Lodge No. 2 Free and Accepted Masons* (Detroit, 1972,) 6. And Jefferson S. Conover, *Freemasonry in Michigan, A Comprehensive History of Michigan Masonry From Its Introduction in 1764, Compiled*. (Coldwater, Michigan: The Conover Engraving and Printing Co, 1897). 49.

²⁰⁶ Catherine Cangany, *Frontier Seaport, Detroit's Transformation into an Atlantic Entrepôt*. (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2014), 29.

²⁰⁷ Jefferson S. Conover, *Freemasonry in Michigan, a Comprehensive History of Michigan Masonry from its Earliest Introduction in 1764*. (Coldwater, Michigan: The Conover Engraving and Printing Company, 1897), 49.

the city gave Brother and President George Washington his oath of office, in the presence of many city leaders and fellow masons. Shortly after President Washington took office, he needed a presidential mansion to stay at in New York. A suitable residence was provided by Brother Alexander Macomb, writing to the President's Secretary, Tobias Lear on January 31, 1790. He states, "Mr. Macomb presents Mr. Lear with his respects he has receiv'd his note of this morning and informs him that he will take pleasure in affording any assistance in his power to effect the accomplishment of the Wishes of the President of the United States. If Mr. Lear chuses, Mr. M – will propose an immediate exchange of Houses there can be no impropriety in such negociation, and he (mutilated) from Mr. Ottos obliging disposition the Transaction might succeed. At the same time he could speak for any part of the furniture that might be wanted...."²⁰⁸ Macomb and Astor would become business partners, and it is possible that their initial meetings were through Brothers Robert R. Livingston and George Washington.

As Astor's business dealings grew, he made connections, often with other masons who helped further his interests and their own in what became the American Fur Trade Company.

After the Revolutionary War, there was a boom in the fur trade. Peace in Europe and American helped to stabilize the market and increase trade. In 1784 the total output of furs was estimated to be £154,000 with almost two-thirds of that coming from American territory. It was reported that Detroit had an annual value of £40,800, and Michilimackinac, £60,400. Trade at the time was becoming more organized and sophisticated. Larger companies began to push out the individual traders, and the new international boundaries further complicated trade

²⁰⁸ Founders Online, "Alexander Macomb to Tobias Lear, 31 January 1790." Founders.Archives.Gov. <https://founders.archives.gov/documents/Washington/05-05-02-0040> (Assessed June 19, 2020).

networks. For example, during the winter of 1783-1784, the Great Northwest Company was founded at Montreal. Most of the company's outposts were on the Canadian side of the 1783 boundary, but the company also traded in America, obtaining provisions from John Askin at Detroit. Partnerships and companies formed and split with some regularity. In 1795, the XY Company was formed in Montreal by some of the partners of the Northwest Company who had left the parent company after it reorganized in 1798. This ushered in a brief but intense trade rivalry, which only ended when the XY Company merged with the Northwest Company in 1804. Another firm, the Michilimackinac Company, appeared a couple of years later trading with and making deals for territory with the Northwest Company. This was a fluid situation with companies forming and dissolving, new international boundaries being enforced and national sovereignty being established and tested.²⁰⁹

The peace terms of 1783 caused uproar, Lord Walsingham pointed out that Michilimackinac was the rendezvous for the fur trade of the Canadian West, a trade which henceforth would be "at the mercy of the United States." The Earl of Shelburne, Prime Minister, stated that the only alternative was to continue the war as the Americans were adamant on this point. Parliament continued to argue about the loss of the fur trade and its impact on Canada, the cost of building the forts and the reduction in the importance of the ports in Montreal and Quebec. However, much of the debate was unnecessary as Britain

²⁰⁹Frank E. Ross. "The Fur Trade of the Western Great Lakes Region," *Minnesota History* 19 (1938): 299-300. See also: John Inglis to George Grenville, May 31, 1790 and *Hudson's Bay Company*, 2: 198-199.

retained the western posts until 1796, in direct violation of the treaty, and maintained an active fur trade until after the War of 1812.²¹⁰

National sovereignty and shifting boundaries were a source of concern for British traders. American military units occupied the lake posts in 1796 giving the Americans more control over the waterways. In 1799 Michilimackinac was made a port of entry where all British trade goods entering the United States in that region were supposed to be transported. The United States government established factories for the fur trade at Fort Dearborn and Michilimackinac. The situation for the British became intolerable when American troops fired on and seized some boats belonging to the Michilimackinac Company on the lakes. As a result of this incident, merchants from Montreal sent the governor of Canada a memorial stating, "Your Memorialists have for some time seen progressing, with extreme concern, a systematic plan to drive the British Indian traders from the American territory," In addition, "they must soon succeed, if His Majesty's Government does not take up their cause with decision." The Montreal traders were concerned about freedom of navigation on the Great Lakes and, "That the Indian trade within the American Limits must speedily be abandoned by British subjects, if not protected against interruptions of free navigation of the Lakes, fiscal extortions and various other vexations."

In addition, traders were also concerned with the relationships they had developed with the Native Americans, these relationships were often personal and "can never be regained and with its abandonment, will finish British influence with the Indian Nations residing within the

²¹⁰ Frank E. Ross. "The Fur Trade of the Western Great Lakes Region," *Minnesota History* 19 (1938): 297.

limits of Canada.²¹¹ The American government was asserting control over its territory and encouraging American traders to push into the market knowing there were both fiscal and political advantages in gaining market share while driving a wedge between the British traders and their Native American partners.

In the post war years, Astor cautiously entered the fur trade market. While not directly challenging the Canadian hegemony, throughout the 1790's he traveled to Montreal as it was the center of the North American fur industry and the best place to buy furs from various independent traders and agents. Astor understood his position as an American fur trader was limited. In the 1780's Montreal merchants dominated both the Canadian and United States trade. Furs arrived from three areas. The Detroit region was the transfer point for traders in the area south of the Great Lakes, for example, along the Wabash and Maumee rivers. Mackinac was a second central location for collecting and distributing furs and trade items. From Mackinac traders travelled west and south to Green Bay, Chicago, the Illinois and the Mississippi River. The third point was located at Grand Portage, which was the path to the far west and the abundant furs of the Athabasca region. Generally, furs would move through these points and thence to Montreal on the way to London.²¹² This was the monopoly that Astor sought to break.

Events on the world stage helped Astor achieve business prominence throughout the 1790's and early 1800's. American foreign trade grew rapidly with American flagged vessels travelling the globe. Constant warfare in Europe resulted in the opening and closing of ports of

²¹¹ "Colonial Office Records," in *Michigan Pioneer and Historical Collections*, 25: (1896): 255-256.

²¹² John Denis Haeger, *John Jacob Astor, Business and Finance in the Early Republic*. (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1991), 51.

the French, British, and Spanish homelands as well as overseas possessions, which disrupted European commerce but was a boon merchants and ships from neutral nations, such as the United States. Trade with China and especially Latin America grew significantly from 1790-1812, with ever increasing shipping tonnage going to Havana, Santo Domingo, and the West Indies. This will be discussed in more detail in the next chapter. Astor used Masonic political and business connections to help him achieve a dominant position in the fur trade in both North America as well as internationally.²¹³

In 1807, Astor successfully challenged the Canadian monopoly's and exponentially increased his business and political reach. In June 1807, the British warship, *Leopard*, fired on the American frigate *Chesapeake* off the coast of Virginia. The *Chesapeake* suffered 21 casualties and took, heavy damage, but perhaps worst of all from a political standpoint, a British boarding party came aboard and seized four suspected deserters. This was a huge blow to the national honor of the United States. This incident was the result of years of unresolved political, economic and diplomatic issues involving impressments, citizenship and the rights of neutral nations.²¹⁴ As a response, Congress passed the Embargo Act in December 1807, which prohibited all trade with foreign ports. The passage did not end the chance of going to war, and President Jefferson, concerned with keeping the Indian nations out of any potential conflict, wanted to encourage the Indian trade. On January 7th, 1808, Jefferson penned a letter to Albert Gallatin, his Secretary of the Treasury wondering if it would be prudent to encourage

²¹³ Ibid., 66-67.

²¹⁴ For additional information on naval impressment and why it was such a crucial concern to Britain, the United States and other European maritime nations, see, Denver Brunsman. *The Evil Necessity, British Naval Impressment in the Eighteenth-Century Atlantic World*. (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2013).

merchants to use their capital in an effort to help maintain alliances with the Indians and grow the American fur trade: "Have you thought of the Indian drawback? the Indians can be kept in order only by commerce or war. the former is the cheapest. unless we can induce individuals to employ their capital in that trade, it will require an enormous sum of capital from the public treasury, & it will be badly managed. a drawback for 4. or 5. years is the cheapest way of getting that business off our hands. Affectionate salutns."²¹⁵

Astor outlined and submitted a plan that encompassed both his personal business goals and the political needs of the nation. Astor's plan involved an American fur trading company that could not only challenge the Canadians in Montreal, but also operate from the Atlantic to the Pacific and along the entire northern boundary. After the passage of Jay's Treaty, Canadian merchants already feared the Americans taking control of the Great Lakes fur trade. With the Embargo Act and threat of war, to the Canadians, this seemed like a distinct possibility.

Astor realized that his plan had business as well as political dimensions and might require outside investors. Given that, Astor set out to request a charter of incorporation from the New York state legislature. With that goal in mind, on January 25th, 1808, Astor sent a letter to DeWitt Clinton discussing the business and asking for aid in getting his charter.²¹⁶ Clinton's support in this matter was vital as he was both mayor of New York City and a New York State senator. Moreover, Astor and Clinton were both Masonic Brothers in the same

²¹⁵ Thomas Jefferson to Albert Gallatin, 7 January 1808. "Founders Early Access" Rotunda.upress.virginia.edu. <https://rotunda.upress.virginia.edu/founders/default.xqy?keys=FOEA-search-47-2&expandNote=on>

²¹⁶ Astor to De Witt Clinton, 25 January 1808. De Witt Clinton Papers, Columbia University, New York City. While the letter goes into detail regarding Astor's plans. It is not currently assessable due to the closure of the archives. For the purposes of this study, the key issue is their relationship through their membership in the same Masonic Lodge.

lodge. Clinton had been initiated on September 3, 1790. Clinton, like Astor was an extremely active mason. DeWitt Clinton held the most exalted rank in all the branches of Masonry. He was a Grand Master, Grand High Priest in the York Rite, Royal Arch, Grand Master of the Grand Encampment of New York, General Grand Master Knights Templar of the United States and held the highest office in the Scottish Rite body. Regarding the time and energy he devoted to masonry and being a Grand Master, "all the politics and wire-pulling in the world could not have kept him in that honorable position for fourteen successive terms if he had not devoted to it all the care and attention it demanded."²¹⁷ DeWitt Clinton was certainly powerful and influential and without a doubt many other Freemasons were in New York's legislature at the time. The legislature of New York State granted, without debate, a formal charter to the American Fur Company, and the patriotic name was hardly an accident given the diplomatic climate at the time.²¹⁸

In addition to looking at gaining control of the fur trade on the Great Lakes, Astor also had his eyes on extending his network to the Pacific. Since at least 1800, Astor had been engaged in the China trade. This trade forced Astor to enter the importation business as well. China had little use for western products other than furs. This created a perpetual imbalance of trade, forcing Astor to export specie along with furs to secure teas and silks for the return voyage. In spite of the cost outlay, one of his initial voyages to China aboard the *Severn* returned from China with teas and silks and proved so profitable that Astor would stay engaged

²¹⁷ Peter Ross, *A Standard History of Freemasonry in the State of New York, Including Lodge, Chapter, Council, Commandery and Scottish Rite Bodies, Vol. 1.* (New York: The Lewis Publishing Company, 1899), 206.

²¹⁸ David Lavender. "Some American Characteristics of the American Fur Company." *Minnesota History* 40 (1966): 179.

in international markets for years to come.²¹⁹ Astor was likely aware the President Jefferson was interested in encouraging private citizens to be more active in the western fur trade. As Astor's plans developed, he began a lengthy correspondence with the President. On February 27, 1808 Astor sent to letter to President Jefferson stating, "my wish of engaging in an extensive trade with the Indians *Provided* two objects could be obtained viz the countenance & good wishes of the Executive of the united States and a Charter from this State...." Astor mentions working with DeWitt Clinton to obtain a charter. From the federal government, Astor is seeking, "the entire approbation of government I am Sure the buissness could not Succeed neither would I wish to engage in it – the Intention is to carry On the trade So extensively that it may in time embrace the greater part of the fur trade on this Continent the most of which passes not through Canada"²²⁰ Astor laid out the scope of his plans and how he was counting on the support of the government and that without it, the business could not succeed.

President Jefferson and Astor shared regular correspondence, writing freely to each other discussing various business and diplomatic issues. Regarding opportunities on the Pacific, Astor was aware that Lewis and Clark had completed their explorations and in 1806-1807 had begun to write their initial reports pertaining to their findings. It seems that Astor may have received insider information about those findings allowing, him to move before other potential

²¹⁹ John D. Haeger. "Business and Practice in the Early Republic: John Jacob Astor and the American Fur Trade." *Western Historical Quarterly* 19 (1988): 188-189.

²²⁰ To Thomas Jefferson from John Jacob Astor, 27 February 1808. "Founders Early Access" Rotunda.upress.virginia.edu. <https://rotunda.upress.virginia.edu/founders/default.xqy?keys=FOEA-search-47-2&expandNote=on>

competition.²²¹ Jefferson waited impatiently for the publication of Lewis's and Clark's journals but it would be years before the journals were fully published. Lewis died in 1809, leaving Clark to work on the publication, which did not happen until 1814. Astor had always moved cautiously and methodically in the Great Lakes trade, carefully inserting himself into the Montreal merchant community and slowly extending his network, but aware of his limitations regarding an American trading in a market dominated by Canadians. Yet he launched his Astoria expedition in 1810, years before the full publication of Lewis and Clark's expedition. Perhaps his Masonic connections aided him in gathering information.

President Jefferson's vice-president was George Clinton, uncle to Masonic Brother, DeWitt Clinton who was helping and working with Astor. George Clinton certainly had the President's ear and could be a conduit for getting information to Astor. In addition, it is possible that George Clinton was a Freemason himself. In the *Standard History of Freemasonry in the State of New York* a passage mentions, "Masons whose influence remains in this portion of our State, the names of George Washington and George Clinton, Governor of New York."²²² In addition to these Masonic connections, both Meriwether Lewis and William Clark were Freemasons. Lewis was a member of Door to Virtue Lodge, No. 44, Albemarle County, Virginia. He petitioned to join and was initiated on December 31, 1796. He was also a Royal Arch Mason having received those Degrees from Staunton Lodge No. 13, but the exact dates are not known. In addition, Lewis was one of the petitioners to the Grand Lodge of Pennsylvania for permission

²²¹ David Lavender. "Some Characteristic of the American Fur Company." *Minnesota History* Vol. 40 (1966): 179. Lavender says that Astor "By channels now unknown" received information to quickened his planning for his Astoria venture.

²²² Peter Ross, *A Standard History of Freemasonry in the State of New York, Including Lodge, Chapter, Council, Commandery and Scottish Rite Bodies, Vol. 1.* (New York: The Lewis Publishing Company, 1899), 175.

to form a new lodge, St. Louis Lodge No. 111, which was constituted on November 8th, 1808 with Meriwether Lewis serving as its first Master. William Clark was also a member of St. Louis Lodge No. 111.²²³ Jefferson may have also helped close the loop between Astor and Lewis. In a letter from Jefferson to Lewis dated July 17th, 1808, Jefferson states that: “A powerful company is at length forming for taking up the Indian commerce on a large scale. they will employ a capital the first year of 300,000 D. and raise it afterwards to a million. the English Mackinac company will probably withdraw from the competition. It will be under the direction of a most excellent man, a mr Astor merchant of N. York, long engaged in the business & perfectly master of it....”²²⁴ After reading the letter, it is possible that Lewis looked into who John Astor was and learning that he was a fellow Mason, offered to assist him with information. Lewis was an active Freemason. After joining a lodge, he continued onto the Royal Arch Degrees, went onto form a new lodge and serve as its first Master. Clearly, Masonry and what Masonry stood for meant something to Lewis. Moreover, Astor through his connections with DeWitt Clinton and his uncle the Vice President, also Freemasons, suggests that he had several possible avenues to learn about the west as he prepared his Astoria venture.

After the *Leopard* and *Chesapeake* incident, Jefferson felt that he had to act. While the British backed down and returned the four Americans that they had seized from the *Chesapeake*, London continued to insist on its right to impress runaway seamen. To make matters worse, Napoleon had revoked his exemption for trading with American flagged ships.

²²³ George Mallis. “Lewis and Clark.” *The Masonic Trowel*. (Boston: The Grand Lodge of Massachusetts, 1996). http://www.themasonictrowel.com/masonic_talk/stb/stbs/96-12.htm

²²⁴ From Thomas Jefferson to Meriwether Lewis, 17 July 1808. “Founders Early Access” Rotunda.upress.virginia.edu. <https://rotunda.upress.virginia.edu/founders/default.xqy?keys=FOEA-search-1-6&expandNote=on>

Now any American ship engaged with trade with Britain could be seized by France as lawful prizes of war.

In an effort to show American resolve, Jefferson along with Congress passed the Embargo Act, which prohibited American ships from sailing to any foreign port. To ensure the act was adhered to and that American ships would only dock at America ports, Jefferson required ship owners to post large bonds. Phrased as “peaceable coercion” by Jefferson, he thought that the economic pressure would bring quick concessions from Britain, in a sense, to redo the nonimportation decrees of the colonies leading up to the Revolution. In some ways, Jefferson had cause to be optimistic, since the previous year America’s imports, mostly from Britain had amounted to roughly \$15 million, while exports had amounted to \$101 million.²²⁵

The Embargo hit the nation so hard that many American merchants questioned whether Jefferson had declared war on them and not the British. For example, exports from New England dropped 75 percent. Thirty thousand sailors were laid off, out of an estimated 40,000 for the nation; many would be put in debtors’ prisons. American ship building collapsed, and farm prices dropped by 50 percent.²²⁶ The Embargo act was repealed in 1809, but, as the War of 1812 commenced, the environment was rapidly changing on the Great Lakes. Astor saw new opportunities there as well as the necessity to call upon Masonic Brothers to come to his assistance.

In 1808 Astor received his charter from the State of New York, and the American Fur Company became the first American company to enter the Michilimackinac fur market.

²²⁵ A. J. Langguth. *Union 1812, The Americans Who Fought the Second War for Independence*. (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2006), 134.

²²⁶ Ibid, 135.

Initially, the company made little attempt to trade in the Great Lakes region under its own name. Two key events in 1810 changed the business climate on the lakes. First, the United States warned that trade restriction would be reinstated unless Britain altered its current economic policies. Second, some Montreal merchants who held shares in both the North West Company and the Michilimackinac Company bought up all the shares of the latter company, renaming it the Montreal Michilimackinac Company. The owners of the new company were well aware of Astor and the American Fur Company; moreover, they knew that Astor was simultaneously moving toward the northwest coast with his Astoria plans, while capable of seizing the southwest trade. Lastly, Astor had made many visits to Montreal in the past to discuss trade negotiations, boundary issues and merging of business interests. In the past, he had met with little success, but now, he clearly had the advantage.²²⁷

With these factors in mind, William McGillivray came to New York on January 28th, 1811 to work out a deal. Astor signed a deal that united the American Fur Company and the Montreal Michilimackinac Company, creating a new entity, the South West Company. The title was important as it was intended to be the equal of the North West Company in power, scope and geographic area in which to trade and operate. Astor came to have a reputation of crushing competition, maximizing profits and being driven to dominate business in the areas he controlled.²²⁸ If this is true, Astor's actions might be out of character. Astor had originally wanted to close the Canadians entirely out of the fur trade in all American territory along its

²²⁷ Frank E. Ross. "The Fur Trade of the Western Great Lakes Region." *Minnesota History*. Vol. 19 (1938), 301.

²²⁸ Anna Youngman. "The Fortune of John Jacob Astor." *Journal of Political Economy*. Vol. 16 (1908), 363. In the article, once the American Fur Company "gained control, they systematized matters, so that there was no competition between their own agents, and private dealers cut into their trade but little for some years."

northern boundary to the pacific coast. The deal Astor and McGillivray worked out was a compromise to avoid competition and share the fur trade and supply in the southwest, the area where both companies had an interest. The agreement articulated, “a reciprocal Communication of the advantages arising out the localities would assure a Materials benefit to each.”²²⁹

William and his brother Simon McGillivray were prominent London merchants and involved with both the North West Company and the Hudson Bay Company. They had both travelled between London and Montreal on several occasions. The agreement with Astor began a long relationship between the McGillivray brothers and Astor. Simon was a well known mason who was invested as Junior Grand Warden by His Royal Highness the Duke of Sussex, Grand Master on May 12th, 1813.²³⁰ Furthermore, in 1822 Simon McGillivray, Esq., a “worthy and distinguished member of our order, on setting out on a visit to North America, to enquire into and report upon the state of Masonry in your province.” McGillivray was made Provincial Grand Master of Upper Canada, a position that he would hold from 1822 to 1830.²³¹ His Brother William McGillivray was also a Mason and was initiated into the same Lodge as his

²²⁹ John Denis Haeger, *John Jacob Astor, Business and Finance in the Early Republic*. (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1991), 128.
https://digital.library.wayne.edu/item/wayne:WayneStateUniversityPress4324/file/PDF_FULL

²³⁰ John Ross Robertson, *The History of Freemasonry in Canada From Its Introduction in 1749. Compiled and Written From Official Records and From Mss. Covering the Period From 1749-1858, in the Possession of the Author, Volume 1, part 1*. (Toronto: George N. Morang & Company), 102. Simon is noted as being a member of the Lodge of Antiquity, No. 2, on October 27th, 1813, but given that he was made the Junior Grand Warden in the same year, he quite possibly had been a Freemason for a few years prior to these appointments’. Currently the records at Freemasons Hall in London are inaccessible to confirm.

²³¹ *Ibid.*, 1097-1098.

Brother, Lodge of Antiquity, No. 2., on February 27th, 1822.²³² It is probable that William was a Mason prior to this as Jessica L. Harland-Jacobs writes that in 1821 “William McGillivray launched his successful bid to take over masonry in Montreal and its environs.”²³³ Both brothers appear to have been active and prominent masons, and Astor may have taken this into account as he negotiated a deal with William. It does seem somewhat out of character for him to compromise when dealing from a position of power. Therefore knowing them to be Masons and thinking of his obligation might have been factors in this transaction. With the deal worked out, it was not long before Astor had to call upon them for assistance.

As the War of 1812 commenced, President Madison implemented a policy of economic force. This was directed at trade and all forms of exchange with the enemy. Congress adopted this idea and passed a protective embargo prior to declaring war, and a bill on July 6th, 1812 prohibited exports to the provinces and maritime exchange with any part of the British Empire.²³⁴ The War of 1812 once again disrupted the fur trade on the Great Lakes causing hardships for many traders, Indians, and merchants.

Astor, knowing that the price of furs would rise during the war, used his masonic connections to bring furs to New York, in spite of the war and national embargo. Astor had a shipment of furs on Mackinaw Island when it fell to the British in 1812. In April 1814, Astor

²³² Ibid., 67. It is not known if William McGillivray was a Mason prior to 1822. Given his close relationship with his brother and his long active Masonic history, it's likely that he was initiated in a lodge in England before this entry appears in the Canadian records. Currently, the Masonic records in England are not digitized and not accessible.

²³³ Jessica L. Harland-Jacobs, *Builders of Empire, Freemasonry and British Imperialism, 1717-1927*. (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2007), 183.

²³⁴ Reginald C. Stuart. “Special Interests and National Authority in Foreign Policy: American-British Provincial Links During the Embargo and the War of 1812. *Diplomatic History*, Vol. 8 (1984): 324.

visited Gallatin and Secretary of State, and Masonic Brother, James Monroe to secure permission to send a vessel under a flag of truce to recover his furs.²³⁵ He was successful in obtaining a letter, which was contingent on Astor's gaining a similar approval from the British. Astor called upon his Masonic Brothers and business connections to assist him. The letter was addressed to Sir George Prevost, the Governor in Chief of British North America, in Montreal, and dated, June 8th, 1814.

We have the Honor of laying before Your Excellency Copy of a Letter from the Secretary of State at Washington to John Jacob Astor Esq. of New York dated the 21st May last containing a permission from the President of the United States to that Gentleman, to send an American Vessel under the Protection of a Flag of Truce from some Port of place on Lake Erie to Michilimackinac for the sole purpose of taking on Board certain Furs & Skins which have been collected at that Place....²³⁶

The letter was signed by McTavish McGillivray & Co and Forsyth Richardson & Co. Regarding his Masonic connections, McGillivray was a Freemason. John Forsyth was the nephew of Freemason James Phyn, whose company has been previously discussed. John Forsyth also was a Mason, having received his Fellowcraft Degree on July 7th, 1806 and his Master Mason Degree on October 13th, 1806, through Zion Lodge No. 10 of Lower Canada.²³⁷ It

²³⁵ Gilbert H. Hill. "Monroe, James. Mason, Soldier, Statesman." In Knightstemplar.org. <http://www.knightstemplar.org/KnightTemplar/articles/JamesMonroe.htm> A 1951 edition of the records of Williamsburg Lodge No. 6 states that James Monroe's petition for membership was favorably received on November 6, 1775. On November 9 of the same year he was initiated as an Entered Apprentice, the first Degree in Masonry. The Lodge does not have records indicating that Monroe received the Sublime Degree of an Master Mason at that lodge, however, he probably received his additional degrees in a military lodge during the Revolution, as many did, and many of the travelling lodges records do not survive. Moreover, Williamsburg Lodge records show membership payments made through October 1780, which would not have been normal had Monroe not become a full member. Lastly, there are records that show Monroe was once a member of Kilwinning Cross Lodge No. 2 of Port Royal, Virginia.

²³⁶ "Letter to Sir George Prevost" *Michigan Pioneer and Historical Collections*, Vol. 15 (Lansing: Michigan Pioneer and Historical Society, 1874-1929), 590.

²³⁷ John Ross Robertson, *The History of Freemasonry in Canada From Its Introduction in 1749. Compiled and Written From Official Records and From Mss. Covering the Period From 1749-1858, in the Possession of the Author, Volume 1, part 1.* (Toronto: George N. Morang & Company, 1900), 231.

is not known if John Richardson was a Freemason. He was involved in many philanthropic activities as well as being President of the Natural History Society of Montreal, a charter member of the Montreal branch of the Agriculture Society and a trustee of the Royal Institution for the Advancement of Learning. Lastly, he was the force behind the foundation of the Montreal General Hospital, which was established in 1819. After his death in May of 1831, Masons, on September 15th, 1831 with the Right Worshipful and Provincial Grand Lodges assisted by Lodges No. 3 and 10, laid the corner stone of the “Richardson Wing” of the Montreal General Hospital.²³⁸ Such an honor usually reserved for fellow Freemasons, so it is possible Richardson was also a Mason.

Astor, under a flag of truce, brought his furs back to New York for and maintained a supply of furs to sell throughout the war. Most were sent to Europe, but many were sold in New York. In October 1812, he held an auction offering the furs of 59,557 muskrats, 6,817 raccoons, 1,454 fishers, 795 otters, plus 2,956 pounds of beaver skins along with a large assortment of other pelts. The money from these sales would position Astor to dominate the fur trade market once peace returned.²³⁹

The peace that ended the war in 1815 ushered in the second great period of the fur trade in the Great Lakes region. In Detroit, the summer trade alone in 1821 was more than

²³⁸ John H. Graham. *Outlines of the History of Freemasonry in the Province of Quebec*. (Montreal: John Lovell & Son, 1892), 173. This is a compiled collection of original records and manuscripts detailing the history of Freemasonry in Quebec.

²³⁹ John Denis Haeger, *John Jacob Astor, Business and Finance in the Early Republic*. (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1991), 152.
https://digital.library.wayne.edu/item/wayne:WayneStateUniversityPress4324/file/PDF_FULL

\$300,000, and figures from Michilimackinac were larger. Astor's American Fur Trade Company would come to control around 95 percent of the market.²⁴⁰

The Seven Years War saw the introduction and spread of Masonic Lodges throughout the Great Lakes region. Lodges grew in lockstep with towns and facilitated market, political, and business connections. Patronage and affinity circles were the key to advancement and survival in the eighteenth century. With the conclusion of the Seven Years War, Freemasons held prominent positions in government, the military, and business worlds. This continued until the end of the War of 1812 and beyond. Merchants and government official relied on a person's reputation and trustworthiness. Masons through their shared initiation rituals and obligations of mutual assistance created an extra layer of mutual trust and thus came to rely on each other in creating a network linking the Great Lakes frontier to the Atlantic Coast. The Middle Ground theory suggests that all groups had to accommodate each other as no one group had the power to coerce the others and force them to do what one wanted. Freemasons and their network of brothers worked in the middle ground as brothers provided an extra layer of trust and security where coercion was not needed. The dealings of John Jacob Astor present a good case study. In addition, these Masonic Brothers would extend their network to many parts of the world, linking the Great Lakes to the broader Masonic network and Atlantic World.

²⁴⁰ Frank E. Ross. "The Fur Trade of the Western Great Lakes Region." *Minnesota History* Vol. 19 (1938): 306.

Chapter IV: The Masonic Network, Great Lakes to the World

Masonic networks spread throughout the Great Lakes region. This area was on the frontier of vast empires, which were in almost continuous conflict. These empires were in competition for land and the lucrative fur trade. The lands intersected numerous Native American Nations, who were vital to this trade. This environment ensured that the masons living and conducting business on the Great Lakes had an international chain of Lodges to network with. Furs from western Lake Superior and south of Illinois would make their way through a vast trading and transportation web that flowed through Mackinaw, Detroit, Montreal and New York, to name a few key hubs. Masons at these hubs were often the principal traders and they along with Brothers throughout the Great Lakes and Atlantic network ensured that both furs and Masonic ideas moved freely across these boundaries.

Masonry, through its egalitarian and enlightenment ideas rapidly grew in popularity and provided Lodge members an unmatched trove of potential contacts. Business was still conducted through trusted contacts and letters of introduction, and Masonic membership helped to facilitate the opening of doors that would normally be closed to a person not of the correct social standing, a factor of great importance in promoting or hindering business relationships. Even the most fair-minded aristocrat might think twice about being seen in certain settings with the “wrong person” even if that person was a merchant whose wealth far exceeded that of the aristocrat, but meeting together in a Lodge or knowing a person to be a mason would help smooth things out. Moreover, regarding international travel, being a mason allowed a Masonic merchant, ship captain, or government official upon arrival in a new port the possibility of having like-minded and sympathetic people to call upon.

Flying a Masonic flag could indicate that the vessel was captained or owned by a mason, was carrying news of importance to other masons, or perhaps the masons on the ship wanted to have some sort of informal meeting on board. While there are examples of lodges being chartered on ships, the practice was rare. In many cases a captain flying a Masonic flag aboard his ship likely sought to trade and work with other masons, knowing that he should receive fair treatment while dealing with fellow masons. Maritime routes were the information highways at the time, and ports of call allowed masonic communication networks to spread. Many contemporary 19th-century paintings exist of ships flying Masonic flags when entering ports, suggesting this was a relatively normal sight. Ships flying both American and Masonic flags indicate the breadth of the Masonic network in the Atlantic world and beyond.



Figure 6: The Bark *Lincoln* in Smyra, Turkey, July 4th, 1853. The ship is flying a Masonic Flag, the square and compass, at the top of its main mast. By Raffaele Corsini 1853. National Heritage Museum, 85.9²⁴¹

²⁴¹ Raffaele Corsini was active from 1830-1865. The inscription on the painting reads: "Bark *Lincoln*, W.H. Polleye Master Laying at anchor in Smyrna July 4th, 1853. The artist's signature is at the lower right. The *Lincoln* was built in Maine and was probably engaged in the opium trade, which was used in many medicines at the time. Corsini painted the *Lincoln* to commemorate Independence Day in 1853 and was commissioned to paint several ships by their captains.

<http://mdsmobius.supremecouncil.org/detail.php?module=objects&type=browse&id=23&term=Turkey%3A+Smyrna&page=1&kv=2841&record=0&module=objects>

Regarding Freemasonry in Turkey, the Grand Lodge of Scotland, which was founded in 1736 opened Lodges in Aleppo and Smyrna and by the middle of the nineteenth century lodges were in Istanbul, Lebanon, Syria, Egypt, Cyprus and Macedonia. Dumont, P. (2005). Freemasonry in Turkey: A by-product of Western penetration. *European Review*, 13(3), 481-493. doi:10.1017/S106279870500058X

For additional information about Freemasonry in the Ottoman Empire, see: Dorothe Sommer, *Freemasonry in the Ottoman Empire, A History of the Fraternity and its Influence in Syria and in the Levant*. (London: IB Tauris, 2015).



Figure 7: The painting depicts the bark *Isaac Rich* as it entered the port of Leghorn, Italy, in 1876. The artist, Luigi Renault (1845-ca. 1910), was active in Leghorn from 1858 to 1880 and was appointed marine painter to King Victor Emanuel. Ships might fly a Masonic flag if the owner or the captain was a Freemason. In the case of the *Isaac Rich*, the ship's captain, William Bartlett Sheldon (d. 1903), joined New Jersey's Burlington Lodge No. 32 in 1863. The Masonic Flag is flying at the top of the mizzen mast, the same mast flying the American Flag.

After the Revolutionary War and the creation of the United States, masons and people wishing to join the fraternity petitioned the newly created Grand Lodges of the United States for membership. Each state eventually formed its own Grand Lodge. The Grand Lodge of Pennsylvania seemed particularly engaged in the granting of petitions. Philadelphia, being a major sea port, was a convenient hub for shipping and receiving news and trade goods for all over the world. Freemasonry is an enlightenment institution, and it is interesting to note that often brothers and potential members requested to align themselves with an American Grand Lodge as opposed to the Grand Lodge of their home country in the decades following the

American Revolution. Perhaps they viewed the new American Republic as an ideal expression of enlightenment principles converging with new forms of government.²⁴²

For example, at a Grand Lodge meeting in Philadelphia on December 18th 1789, a petition written in French arrived from a number of Brethren of Port-au-Prince, on the island of St. Domingo, French West Indies. The request was for a warrant, which the Grand Lodge unanimously approved. The petition had requested that their new lodge be named the Union of Franco-American Hearts and was listed as Lodge No. 47. The letter requesting the petition also states:

At the foot of the great Architect of the universe we beg to offer our respectful homage of tender affection united the Freemasons of the two hemispheres.....The seven arts which we know and which have been transmitted to us by the wise Hermes, the conquering Nimrod, and which your nation practice with so much distinction and honor, have at all times contributed to the formation of temples, erected to the virtue and to good order; -- it is principally in your country that these famous monuments of Masonic zeal exist – as your plans and edifices are astonishing the whole univers, it is therefore not surprising that Free Masons from another Kingdom seek to claim light at your hearth and to place themselves under your colors.²⁴³

The brothers who petitioned the Grand Lodge of Pennsylvania had a clear reason for doing so. They had a desire to align themselves with the new United States and the ideas it

²⁴² Regarding the formation of the new nation's government, George Washington chose three Masons for his first Cabinet as follows: Secretary of Treasury, Alexander Hamilton; Secretary of War, General Henry Knox; and Attorney General, Edmund Randolph. There is no solid evidence that Secretary of State, Thomas Jefferson was a Mason, but he took part in Masonic ceremonies and many of his family and closest associates were Freemasons. Washington wrote as follows: "being persuaded that a just application of the principles on which the Masonic fraternity is founded must be promotive of private virtue and public prosperity, I shall always be happy to advance the interests of the Society and be considered by them a deserving Brother." One of Washington's first duties was to appoint the first Chief Justice and four Associate Justices of the Supreme Court. Four of the five were Masons. The first Congress elected under the Constitution had several Masons in its membership. In the Senate of the twenty-six members twelve are known to have been Masons: Twenty of the sixty-six men who served in the House of Representatives are known to have been Masons. Clearly the new government was founded on the political and enlightenment ideas that masons supported.

²⁴³ Julius F. Sachse, *Old Masonic Lodges of Pennsylvania, "Modern" and "Ancients" 1730-1800, Which Have Surrendered Their Warrants Or Affiliated With Other Grand Lodges. Compiled from Original Records in the Archives of the R.W. Grand Lodge, F. & A.M. of Pennsylvania, Under the Direction of the Committee on Library by Julius F. Sachse. Volume II 1779-1791.* (Lancaster: The New Era Printing Company, 1913), 252-253.

espoused, despite the fact that they belonged politically to another kingdom. In other nations such as France and England, the Enlightenment was taking place in the context of centuries of monarchical rule, ranging in style from the constitutional monarchy of Britain to the absolutism of King Louis XIV. The proponents of enlightenment ideals struggled, at times violently, with well-established laws and customs. After the Revolutionary War, the United States was a blank slate in terms of how it would form its new government. The republican system was embraced by many masons of the period, including it would seem, brothers from the West Indies. Beyond extending their masonic network and connections, they were also interested in fostering trade relations. The petition also states:

We have opened and will welcome with emotions of sensitiveness and of pleasure all of our American brethren to our Lodge (erected under the distinct title of the "Reunion of the hearts – Franco American") who come invested with authentic certificates from the different lodges of which they are members. Our object in that respect will prove to you that we desire to fraternize with you in the fullest manner, as by the distinctive title of our 'Orient' has already come to be ours in common.

We have, very much honored Grand Master, shown our zeal for the American Free masonry still further, -- the majority of the brethren, forming the Orient, live on the coast where your merchant ships land, -- we have appointed a representative to give us information of all the vessels, as they arrive, and as soon as we are informed that the Captain or some of the crew are free masons, we offer them all the services which circumstances will permit to be useful to them.²⁴⁴

In this example, the petition had Masonic, political and economic aspects. The brothers of Port-au-Prince wanted to align with a Masonic body that they viewed as acting in a proper manner. The new republican government of the United States seemed proper to them. In addition, masonry in North America was experiencing rapid growth, and many in American society seemed to embrace Masonic ideas. Lastly, trade and economics between the United

²⁴⁴ Ibid., 253.

States and the West Indies were strong motivating factors for petitioning a Grand Lodge in a state with a major sea port. One can envision a ship flying a Masonic flag, and Masonic representatives in Port-au-Prince waiting to hear Masonic news and conduct fair and equitable trade, brother to brother.²⁴⁵

As shown in the above paintings, ships flying American and Masonic flags were engaged in trading activities all over the globe. One Mason, Henry Eckford, was involved in the building of many merchant vessels for other Masonic Brothers, such as John Astor, who was discussed in the previous chapter. Eckford was one of the most prominent shipbuilders in the United States. He was a member of Fortitude Lodge No. 19, in Brooklyn, New York and is listed as the Junior Warden under a Warrant dated: December 4th, 1799.²⁴⁶ Eckford, through his masonic connections met many of New York's business and political leaders, such as Mayor DeWitt Clinton, Chancellor Robert Livingston, and John Jacob Astor, all fellow masons. Eckford built several ships for Astor, including the three-masted ship *Beaver* of 427 tons, in 1805. He later built the *Magdalen* in 1808 and the brig, *Sylph*. In 1809 he built the brig *Fox* and in 1810 the ship *Hannibal*. The *Fox* was noted for her speed based on a new hull design by Eckford. This ship made the trip from Calcutta, India to New York in 90 days, a record that lasted for 40

²⁴⁵ For information on American Society and Freemasonry at this time, see: Seven C. Bullock, *Revolutionary Brotherhood, Freemasonry and the Transformation of the American Social Order, 1730-1840*. (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996).

²⁴⁶ Henry Whitemore, *Free Masonry in North America from the Colonial Period to the Beginning of the Present Century: Also The History of Masonry in New York from 1730 to 1888: in Connection with the History of the Several Lodges Included in what is now known at the Third Masonic District of Brooklyn*. (New York: Artotype Printing and Publishing Co., 1889), 89, 93. This is a compilation of primary source material which looks at various lodge histories and biographical information about members derived from Lodge records.

years.²⁴⁷ These ships and their routes demonstrate that Astor was engaged in trade with India and China and that he relied upon his fellow mason, Eckford to build his ships. This new hull form, among Eckford's other accomplishments earned him international recognition and fame. For example, Eckford travelled to Constantinople, arriving in August 1831, where Sultan Mahmud II hired him as the Chief Naval Constructor for the empire. Sultan Mahmud II was apparently so impressed with Eckford's work that he considered giving him the imperial rank of Bey of the Empire.²⁴⁸ Figure 6, above, shows a ship at anchor in Smyrna. Masonic Lodges were in Smyrna as early as 1786 and masonry was growing in Turkey at this time.²⁴⁹ These relationships and connections are indicative of the relationships that Masons built among themselves throughout the world.

Returning to the West Indies, in order to understand why a lodge in Port-au-Prince would petition the Grand Lodge of Pennsylvania, it is necessary to look at masonry in the late 18th and early 19th centuries from an Atlantic perspective.²⁵⁰ Masonry spread parallel to, and as an aspect of, European imperial expansion. Lodges in both Europe and North America flourished from the Seven Years War forward. British, French and Dutch Caribbean colonies

²⁴⁷ Steven M. Selig, *Draughts, The Henry Eckford Story*. (Scottsdale, Arizona: Agreka History Preserved, 2008), 33-36. www.historypreserved.com

²⁴⁸ Henry Howe, *Memoirs of the Most Eminent American Mechanics: Also, Lives of Distinguished European Mechanics; Together with a Collection of Anecdotes, Descriptions, &c. &c. Relating to the Mechanic Arts*. (New York: Harper & Brothers Publishers, 1847), 216.

²⁴⁹ Celil Layiktez, *The History of Freemasonry in Turkey*. (A World of Freemasonry, Internet Lodge, 2001), <https://internet.lodge.org.uk/index.php/research/93-library/research/231-the-history-of-freemasonry-in-turkey> Of note, Freemasonry has a long history in Turkey, however, part of the rapid growth in the 1850's is due to the influx of French and English troops into the region during the Crimean War.

²⁵⁰ For a better understanding of the concepts of Atlantic history, see: Bernard Bailyn, *Atlantic History, Concept and Contours* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2005). And David Armitage and Michael J. Braddick, Ed. *The British Atlantic World, 1500-1800* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009).

saw their major port towns become Masonic hubs, as the request for a warrant from Port-au-Price to Philadelphia demonstrated. These lodges served social, political and economic functions, with most lodges being located near the Atlantic coast or its tributaries. Grand Lodges recognized this and fostered communications between lodges and members throughout the Masonic network. For example, the Grand Lodge of New York in reprinting of its constitution in 1800 states: “Resolves, It is the opinion of this grand lodge, that a brotherly connection and correspondence with the Right Worshipful Grand Lodges in North-America, France, England, Scotland, Ireland, and the West-Indies, will be productive of honor and advantage to the craft.”²⁵¹ Masons were aware of the extensive web of communications provided by the brothers and lodges. At the same time, while the fraternity was a supranational organization, it was not immune from national politics. As masonry spread to many parts of the globe, events in one jurisdiction could have repercussions in other areas.

The Lodge of *Les Frères Unis*, (United Brothers,) provides an example of how one lodge was impacted by events of the Atlantic world. The Lodge, located on the island of St. Lucia, received its charter from the Grand Orient of France on February 27th, 1788, and at its opening had 28 members. Only two of them were born in St. Lucia; one member came from Grenada and another one from Scotland. The others came from France, Guadeloupe, Marie-Galante and most of all, Martinique. The lodge had only been in operation for around six weeks when French deputy Jean-Baptiste Victor Hugues, a former planter from Haiti, arrived in St. Lucia with

²⁵¹ Peter Ross, *A standard History of Freemasonry in the State of New York, Including Lodge, Chapter, Council, Commandery and Scottish Rite Bodies, Volume 1* (New York: The Lewis Publishing Company, 1899), 165. This is a reprint of the constitution in 1800, but was in effect long before the reprinting date.

his guillotine prepared to enforce the more radical ideas behind the French Revolution, starting by disposing of the royalist planters.²⁵²

Benoit Dert, the lodge treasurer, managed to get hold of the charter and flee to Trinidad before the lodge was burned down by Hugue's troops. Upon Dert's arrival in Trinidad, he found other French masons who had fled from Haiti, Martinique (prior to it becoming English) and Guadeloupe in the path of the French Revolution. From 1794 to 1798, the lodge, in exile, held meetings with members consisting of refugees from various islands as well as some Spanish Masons. Given that Trinidad had been under British rule since 1797, the Brothers decided to relinquish the French Charter, and, since many of the Brothers had maintained communications with the Grand Lodge of Pennsylvania while they were in Haiti, they petitioned and received a Warrant from the Grand Lodge on July 10th, 1798. Regarding the lodges in Haiti, the Grand Lodge of Pennsylvania received a report on December 6th, 1799 stating that lodge No. 47 "at Port Republician, in the Island of St. Domingo by their Communication, dated December 6th, 5799²⁵³, after repeating the Assurances of their respect Brotherly Affection towards the R. W. Grand Lodge, inform that owing to the Circumstances of the Colony they were obliged for several Months to suspend their works, after which Time they did resume them." They also state that "The return of their Members accompanying the last Communication, states Fifty One Members whose Civil qualities and Masonic abilities promise a speedy increase of Ancient

²⁵² Cécile Révauger. "Les Frères Unis (The United Brothers' Lodge) The French Touch in Trinidad," *The Journal of Caribbean History* 42 (2008): 191.

²⁵³ Masons use a dating system called: Anno Lucis, meaning, in the Year of Light. It is used in Masonic ceremonial and formal communications and proceedings. It is the equivalent to the Gregorian dating system plus 4,000 years. So the above example would be 1799.

Masonry in the Island of St. Domingo.”²⁵⁴ The political and social conditions on the island and in France during the end of the eighteenth and beginning of the nineteenth centuries, along with the successful Revolutionary War in the United States helped promote the spread of American Freemasonry in places like St. Domingo. Several lodges were warranted on the island, all with charters from the Grand Lodge of Pennsylvania and all conducting business in French. The lodges are:

- Lodge No. 47, Réunion Des Coeurs Franco-Américains at Port Republicain (Port-au-Prince) chartered on December 18th, 1789.
- Lodge No. 87, Les Ferers Reunis, at Le Cap (Cape Haytein, Cap. François), which was a seaport of Haiti on the north coast, about 85 miles northeast of Port-au-Prince. The charter was granted on December 15th, 1800.
- Lodge No. 88, La Concorde, at St. Marc, a settlement on the west coast of San Domingo, 44 miles west of Port-au-Prince. The charter was granted on May 4th, 1801.
- Lodge No. 89, Les Fereres Sincerement Re-Unis, at Aux Carges, du Fond de L’Isle a Vachas, San Domingo, on the coast, about 92 miles southwest of Port-au-Prince. The charter was granted on May 4th, 1801.²⁵⁵

Theses lodges, all of which are based on the Caribbean coast, stood ready to assist ships arriving from all over the Atlantic world and especially ships carrying masons or flying a Masonic flag. Philadelphia, being a crucial seaport along with other key ports such as New York and

²⁵⁴ Julius F. Sachse, *Old Masonic Lodges of Pennsylvania, “Modern” and “Ancients” 1730-1800, Which Have Surrendered Their Warrants Or Affiliated With Other Grand Lodges. Compiled from Original Records in the Archives of the R.W. Grand Lodge, F. & A.M. of Pennsylvania, Under the Direction of the Committee on Library by Julius F. Sachse. Volume II 1779-1791.* (Lancaster: The New Era Printing Company, 1913), 262-263.

²⁵⁵ Ibid., 264.

Boston, was the launching point for several well-known masonic traders bringing goods from the Great Lakes region to trade throughout the Atlantic World and beyond.

In Trinidad, the masons clearly felt a strong ideological connection to the Masonic Lodges in the United States. Trade networks explain part of that fealty, but masonic and republican ideas also had a significant bearing. The lodge on Trinidad gave up its American charter during the War of 1812, most likely in an effort to appease government officials. The Lodge obtained a new warrant from the Grand Lodge of Scotland, becoming Les Frères Unis 327 S.C. (Scottish Constitution) on November 1st, 1813. It still conducted business in French.²⁵⁶ The reason to request a charter from the Grand Lodge of Scotland may have had to do with enlightenment and abolitionist ideas. The Grand Lodge of England in 1813 had its two Grand Lodges united under one new Grand Lodge. This brought together the Ancient and Moderns to form a United Grand Lodge of England. The new Grand Lodge, in bringing together the bodies of masonry, altered its constitutions. In the old constitutions from the first Grand Lodge in England in 1721, a candidate must be “free born.”²⁵⁷ No trace of servitude was compatible with the honor and prestige of being a mason. This restriction went so far as to prohibit a free born man who was a liveried servant from being eligible for membership. After slavery has been abolished in the West Indies the Grand Lodge of England ceased to use the term “free born” and inserted that of

²⁵⁶ Cécile Révauger. “Les Frères Unis (The United Brothers’ Lodge) The French Touch in Trinidad,” *The Journal of Caribbean History* 42 (2008): 191-192.

²⁵⁷ Peter Ross, *A standard History of Freemasonry in the State of New York, Including Lodge, Chapter, Council, Commandery and Scottish Rite Bodies, Volume 1* (New York: The Lewis Publishing Company, 1899), 228-229. This is a bound compilation of lodge minutes, writings of members and other primary source masonic records.

“free man.”²⁵⁸ In considering a man’s actual condition and not that which he was born, the English Grand Lodge made it more difficult than ever for a man who even temporarily loses his rights as a freeman to continue his membership in the fraternity.

This additional restriction could cause freedmen to be ineligible to become masons. The charter from Scotland was specifically requested because the Grand Lodge of Scotland “takes no notice of color or birth.”²⁵⁹ Several of the members of Les Frères Unis 327 S.C. Lodge embraced Republican and abolitionists ideas. In 1802, a few years before the abolition of the slave trade, Canning, who was a member of Antiquity Lodge No.2 and was also involved with the lodge on Trinidad, stated that “no grants should be made on unclaimed lands in the newly ceded island of Trinidad except on the express condition that no newly imported slave should be employed thereon.” His reasoning was that with the large amount of land available a huge number of slaves might still be imported if the government did not pass measures to prevent it.²⁶⁰

Lastly, in 1813, 15 members of the lodge took part in an expedition to Venezuela with Santiago Mariano, a partisan of Masonic Brother Simon Bolivar who had visited the United Brothers Lodge. In this raid, those who became known as the “Immortal 45,” after landing, seized the coastal town of Guairia and battled their way inland to Maturin. This raid altered the war, and Bolivar, pleased with its progress, renewed his efforts. A few years later in 1823, a

²⁵⁸ Ibid., 228.

²⁵⁹ Ibid., 229.

²⁶⁰ Cécile Révauger. “Les Frères Unis (The United Brothers’ Lodge) The French Touch in Trinidad,” *The Journal of Caribbean History* 42 (2008): 193. Canning seems to have been a member of the Cedula and had some authority as a government official. His first name is unknown as he is identified with Antiquity Lodge No.2, whose records with the United Grand Lodge of England are not currently assessable.

Corsican member of the Lodge, Agostini, gave money to the new lodge, Etoile d'Orient in Venezuela, to help pay for its charter.²⁶¹ These brothers were linked to the Atlantic World through politics, economics and their masonic connections, in this case, reaching from the West Indies to Scotland, Philadelphia, France and several Caribbean islands. Members of the lodge were engaged as merchants, planters, and government officials who acted and reacted to events that had an impact on their lives and lodge from across the Atlantic World. Some masons went so far as to take up arms and fought for republicanism and in popular uprisings and revolts.

The masons from Les Frères Unis 327 S.C. that became known as the "Immortal 45" helped fellow mason Bolivar reignite his military activities. In 1816, with Haitian soldiers and other material aid, he landed in Venezuela and began a two-year campaign that would last from 1816 to 1818. At the same time thousands of miles away, North West Company agents and masons, Simon McGillivray and his brother William McGillivray were preparing a ship for a trading voyage to China. Their plans had begun in July, 1814 at Fort William, on Lake Superior. They had been forming plans to sell pelts in China. Americans did not face the restrictions imposed by the East India Company and its monopoly. They intended to use their connections to partner with an American shipping house that would take goods from the Columbia River to Canton, thus avoiding British trade restrictions. They coordinated their plans through a North

²⁶¹ Ibid, 193. Simon Bolivar was initiated as an Entered Apprentice in Freemasonry in Cadiz, Spain in 1803. His lodge in London, Great American Reunion Lodge played a key role regarding independence in the minds of many Latin American leaders. He passed to the Fellowcraft Degree in 1805 and became a Master Mason in 1806. He also received his Scottish Rite Degrees in Paris in 1807 and became a Knight Templar in France in 1807 as well. Masonry clearly was of great importance to Bolivar, he founded two lodges, Protectora de las Vertudes No. 1 in Venezuela, of which he served as Master and Order and Liberty Lodge No.2 in Peru. Taken from an article produced by the Masonic Grand Lodge of Rhode Island. <https://www.rimasons.org/trestleboard/244-simon-bolivar-the-latin-american-liberator-and-freemasonry>.

West Company agent in London, Edward Ellice, son of mason and fur trader Alexander Ellice. The initial voyage would be to the Columbia River trading post on the Pacific Ocean, with stops in South America in route. Passage to China, on the American ship, would follow after loading furs on the Columbia River.²⁶²

The ship chosen for the voyage was the *Colonel Allen*, a French built brig of 310 tons, which could carry stores for a four-to-five year voyage. Of special interest is the list of goods to be sold in South America. The ship had two ports of call in South America, Lima and Buenos Aires. Some of the cargo that was sold included: cutlery, clothing, liquor, over 1,000 muskets, and 100 barrels of powder, to take advantage of “the peculiar circumstances then agitating South America.”²⁶³ The ship carried out its trading mission, bringing a shipment of furs from the Columbia River trading post back to London. Other furs were sent onto Canton aboard the American flagged ship, *Alexander*, avoiding the British restrictions. Records do not indicate who the weapons were traded to, so there is no way to know if they ended up in the hands of Bolivar or his supporters. There is little reason to doubt that Simon and William McGillivray were interested in maximizing their profits, but at the same time, Masons from various lodges were active in promoting republican and enlightenment ideas and certainly could have been sending arms to revolutionaries.

²⁶² H. Lloyd Keith, “Adventure of the Colonel Allan,” *Oregon Historical Quarterly*, Vol. 105 (2004): 550-551.

²⁶³ *Ibid.*, 555-556.

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²⁶⁴ Ibid., 557.

Freemasonry was intended to be a universal brotherhood that transcended political and national boundaries and was unconnected to religious dogma. Its republican ideals were embraced by many. An example of this was mason Eleazer Oswald, who was born in England around 1755. As problems arose between England and her American colonies, his sympathies were with the Americans, and he came to the colonies in 1770. He served under Benedict Arnold at Ticonderoga, during the Revolution, becoming his secretary. He was later made a Lieutenant-colonel of Colonel John Lamb's regiment of artillery where he distinguished himself and earned a reputation as a skilled artillerist. He received official praise for gallantry at the battle of Monmouth. After the Revolutionary War, he moved to Philadelphia and began publication of the "Independent Gazetteer," which often printed vitriolic partisan attacks, initially federalist and later anti-federalist. In 1792, he went to first England and shortly thereafter, to France, where he joined the Republican army. He was commissioned a colonel of artillery and commanded a regiment under Gen. Charles F. Dumoureiz, at Jemmapes. Given his American and English background, the French Government sent him on a secret mission to Ireland to report on the political condition of that country and the practicability of a projected French invasion. Oswald arrived in Ireland by a route through Norway and Scotland; he reported his findings to the Minister of Foreign Affairs in France. Upon receiving no further instructions, he returned to the United States where he died from Yellow Fever shortly upon his return in New York on September 30th, 1795.²⁶⁵

²⁶⁵ Norris S. Barratt and Julius F. Sachse, *Freemasonry in Pennsylvania 1792-1907, As Shown By The Records of Lodge No. 2. F. and A.M. of Philadelphia, Compiles from Original Sources. Volume II, 1781-1813* (Philadelphia: The New Era Printing Company, 1909), 140-141.

Oswald had been politically active his entire life. So much so that he took action fighting in the Revolutionary War and afterward published a political paper that often attacked people on both sides of a given issue. As a mason, he certainly embraced enlightenment ideas pertaining to government, and that may have been his reason to travel to France during the early years of the French Revolution. Many of the revolution's leaders and those whose thoughts and writings inspired the revolution were masons: Mirabeau, Lafayette, Fouché, Talleyrand, Danton, Murat, Robespierre, Voltaire, the Duke of Orleans, Dr. Guillotine, and Napoleon, to name a few.²⁶⁶ Many were members of the same lodge. It is possible that Oswald, given his lifelong political activism and knowledge of masonic involvement in the Revolution, felt strongly enough about the ideas behind the movement that he traveled across the Atlantic and took part in battles as well as more secretive operations. He demonstrated that masons were motivated to act for many reasons, trade and business, certainly, but political goals could be just as powerful, especially when these political ideas were also masonic ones.

Masonic membership transcended national boundaries allowing masonic lodges and functions to serve as back-channel modes of communications and permitting men from different nations to meet. Even during times of war, masons often attended Masonic Balls and processions given by Brothers from other countries. A ceremony such as the opening of a new Grand Lodge in Port Royal, Jamaica in 1794 was attended by several senior masons from other locations. The Jewish leadership from Kingston's Masonic Union Lodge was in attendance, as

²⁶⁶George F. Dillon. *Grand Orient Freemasonry Unmasked, As The Secret Power Behind Communism*. (Britons Publishing Company: Edinburgh, 1884), 65. Monsignor George Dillon became well known for writing his book, which was a series of lectures given in Edinburgh in 1884. His argument was that the Freemasons were engaged in a war Christian civilization and not intended to be an objective history. However, he does document many things such as who among the revolutionaries were active Freemasons.

were men from other Kingston Lodges. The 10th Regiment sent a Masonic delegate. A senior member from a lodge in Jacomel, a port in French Saint-Domingue, the Grand Master and his deputy from Lodge de la Verité in Baltimore, and members of Lodge Americans, a “Union Lodge of Paris.”²⁶⁷ These gatherings served important functions beyond a Masonic ceremony. They created a space for men from diverse backgrounds to extend contacts, perhaps negotiate deals, and in the event of war, as seen in chapter two, hopefully receive sympathetic treatment if one was wounded or captured on the battlefield.

Given that Freemasonry was international and many masons were leaders in their respective vocations, it is perhaps not surprising that many took a strategic view when conducting business or discussing politics. Governor William Hull and territorial judge Augustus Woodward in looking at the fur trade in Detroit worked toward the establishment of a bank. Hull was the governor of the territory of Michigan from 1805 to 1813. Regarding Governor Hull’s Masonic membership, documents from a Michigan Lodge dated May 1807 state that “Brother Hull, requesting the favor of the officers and members of this Lodge (Zion) and the Visiting brethren, after the labor is over, to call and take refreshment with him...” In addition, it was stated that General Hull “proved a true friend of Masonry and frequently took occasion to participate with them in their exercises.”²⁶⁸ Augustus Woodward was appointed by Thomas Jefferson to be Michigan’s first Territorial Chief Justice. Masonic records in Michigan show

²⁶⁷ James Robertson. “Eighteenth-Century Jamaica’s Ambivalent Cosmopolitanism,” *The Journal of the Historical Association* (2014), 628.

²⁶⁸ Jefferson S. Conover, *Freemasonry in Michigan, A Comprehensive History of Michigan Masonry from its Earliest Introduction in 1764, Complied*. (Coldwater: Michigan, The Conover Engraving and Printing Company, 1897), 28.

Woodward taking part in activities by September, 1812.²⁶⁹ Woodward's early years were spent in New York and Philadelphia, where he was probably made a Mason well before his arrival in Michigan in 1805. Currency was scarce in Detroit and the surrounding area. The English had driven out Spanish and French coins, and, when the United States took possession of the territory, English currency came into question. What money there was came from the payments to the garrison and to the few government officials who worked in Detroit, along with what cash was brought into the area by the America Fur Company traders of Brother John Astor. It was these factors, along with the reach of the Great Lakes fur trade, that prompted them to charter a bank.²⁷⁰

In a letter to James Madison on January 31, 1807, Woodward argued for a bank charter, "From the Ocean all the way to these settlements there is a continued line of improvements; following, without deviation, the course of the navigation. It is seldom more than forty miles of breadth; but its length is at least fifteen hundred miles. The Commerce in Furs, which has been carried on in one channel for two centuries, and which will continue for a considerable period to come, is the cause of this phenomenon."²⁷¹ Woodward outlined the international nature of the trade as well as the tensions that sometimes arose, with France and England trying to restrict each other's access to the fur market. He briefly mentions the Chinese market and how the politics and economy of China can cause a shock along the whole trade network.

²⁶⁹ Ibid., 38.

²⁷⁰ "Territorial Government in Michigan" in *Michigan Pioneer and Historical Collections*, 31: (1902): 518-520.

²⁷¹ To James Madison from Augustus Woodward, 31 January 1807. "Founders Early Access" Rotunda.upress.virginia.edu. <https://rotunda.upress.virginia.edu/founders/default.xqy?keys=FOEA-search-1-9&expandNote=on>.

Perhaps most importantly, he states that: "This commerce belongs to another nation. The American have never been able to succeed in it, though the most valuable part of it belongs to their own Territory."²⁷² In this he is referring to that fact that the Great lakes fur trade at the time was still dominated by Montreal, even though most of the fur was taken from American territory.

Government officials who were also masons in the new Michigan territory recognized the international aspects of the fur trade. Masons in Mackinaw and Montreal looked to the United States for partners when British regulations restricted their trade options. Masons in New York had connections in Montreal and London to facilitate the moving of furs and trade goods. Territorial officials attempted to charter banks knowing the value and reach of the Great Lakes fur trade. Masonic brother Woodard was correct to point out in 1807 that an American company had never succeeded in the fur trade. During this same time however another mason John Jacob Astor, had used his many masonic connections to form his company and ultimately dominate the fur trade on the Great Lakes. His business dealings would reach to Europe and China.

Astor created a vast network of contacts and partners. He put together an extensive import and export operation. Items from the Great Lakes region included furs and ginseng, which were sometimes sold in places like Philadelphia or New York. For example, John Astor placed an advertisement in the New York Evening Post on November 18th, 1814 below:²⁷³

²⁷² Ibid.

²⁷³ <https://nyshistoricnewspapers.org/lccn/sn83030385/1814-11-18/ed-1/seq-3/>



Ginseng along with furs served as a foundation for Astor to build his wealth and

business. Ginseng has long been recognized in China as a valuable herb. It became a major export crop of the United States in the 18th and 19th centuries. In the early 1700's, a French Jesuit priest, Père Jartoux, commented on ginseng in a letter from China to a fellow priest. This was published in 1709, originally in French and translated into English in 1714, by the Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society of London. While travelling in China, the priest observed people searching for ginseng. Father Joseph François Lafitau, who worked in North America with mostly Iroquois Native Americans, received the letter. He, with help from the Indians, gathered some ginseng and sent it to China for identification. Native Americans used ginseng for some medicinal purposes, but it does not appear to have been a tribal trade item.²⁷⁴

The demand for ginseng in China led to overharvesting, and the plant almost went extinct in China. The Chinese government initially limited and later prohibited the gathering of ginseng. This, of course, created a massive import market for the plant. In the United States, wild ginseng grows well in the well-drained deciduous hardwood forest that extends from Maine to Minnesota, throughout the Great Lakes region where Astor and other masons had established their trade networks. By the late 18th century, New York became a botanical trading center with plants brought by Indians and settlers. Ginseng was easy to transport,

²⁷⁴ Alvar W. Carlson. "Ginseng: America's Botanical Drug Connection to the Orient." *Economic Botany* Vol. 40 (1986): 233-234.

allowing many to take part in a cash economy. Harvesting ginseng was often done in conjunction with gathering furs. Both were then sold to traders and dealers, such as agents of Astor's American Fur Company, who would transport them for sale to cities such as New York, as illustrated in the advertisement above, or prepare them for shipment to China or Europe.²⁷⁵

While items such as furs, specie, and ginseng were export items, Astor imported a broad array of items, such as gunpowder from London, as advertised in the New York Evening Post on August 30th, 1803²⁷⁶:

GUNPOWDER....400 quarter casks HFB
 Gun-Powder, of an approved quality, received from London per ship Onelda Chief, and for sale by
JOHN JACOB ASTOR,
 August 30 223 Broadway.

Trade with Europe, particularly England, was vital for the manufactured

goods that the Native American tribes desired, items like muskets, gun flints, gunpowder, wool clothing, beads, etc. Nevertheless, it was the China trade that proved to be vastly profitable. Astor needed to maintain all his connections to make his business model work. He needed the ginseng, furs, and cochineal, an insect from which the natural dye carmine is derived, gathered by Native Americans for export to both Britain and China.

Britain sent manufactured items, which after arriving in New York would make the journey inland to Detroit, Montreal, Mackinaw, etc., for further distribution. Astor sent furs, ginseng and specie to China to help diminish the perpetual trade imbalance. For example, in 1800, Astor shipped a cargo of furs, specie, ginseng, and cochineal aboard the *Severn*. This ship returned with teas and silks and was so profitable that, in short order, the *Severn* was bound

²⁷⁵ Ibid., 234-235.

²⁷⁶ <http://nyshistoricnewspapers.org/lccn/sn83030385/1803-10-05/ed-1/seq-2/>

JUST received per brig *Seneca*, from Canton, and for sale by the subscriber,

1500	pieces colored Crapes	
1100	do black do	
1100	do do Sargets	
500	do cross barr'd do	
30	do figured do	
100	do changeable do	
300	do black Sinchews	
100	do changeable do	
50	do green do	
50	do blue do	
250	do black Satins	
250	do black 4-4 Silk Handkfs.	
200	do do 7-8 do	
1000	do cross barr'd 4-4 do	
200	do do 7-8 do	
50	do black Florentines, assorted	
50	do mixed Lustrings	
100	do Pelongs, 100 do Ponjees	
400	do Congkinn, assorted colors	
750	do Grape Shawls	
700	lbs. black Sewing Silks	
600	do colored do. 50 do green do	
3000	pieces blue Nankens	
4000	do long yellow do	
3000	do long white do	
20000	do short yellow do	
100	boxes Tea Cups & Saucers, 300 ps. ea.	
50	do breakfast do do	200 do
100	do tea Sets, 49 pieces each	
10	do Table Service, 172 do	
10	do Flat Plates, 150 do	
5	do Soup Plates, 150 do	
5	do Desert do	300 do
600	do White Sugar	
5	chests Rhubarb	
553	bundles Cassia	
26	chests & 42 boxes Gunpowder Tea	
15	do and 58 do Imperial do	
63	do and 60 half do Hyson do	
54	do Young Hyson do	
224	do and 200 half do Hyson Skin do	
100	do and 340 do Souchong do	
100	quarter chests Bohea do	

JOHN JACOB ASTOR,
dec 3 1w 8 Vesey-street.

again for China in 1802 carrying, 2,454 beaver skins, 600 otter skins, plus \$43,000 in specie. These trips became so frequent that Astor built and deployed even more ships,²⁷⁷ some of which were built by fellow mason Oswald.

There was an enormous trade imbalance. When the Brig *Seneca* arrived from Canton on December 10th, 1817, John Astor posted an advertisement in the New York Evening Post, listing items brought from China for sale. There were silks, teas, porcelain ceramics, etc. Many of these items were high value items that could be sold in small quantities, such a tea and spices. These items yielded massive profits. In addition, these small, high value items

allowed a single ship to transport a massive amount of these items, making Astor, and others a fortune with each successful voyage.

Astor, by the time the Embargo Act of 1807 was passed, had become a wealthy and well-connected trader, so much so that he was able to get exemptions to the Act and continue his trade with China. In July 1808, Chinese businessman Punqua Winchong was in New York, but he needed passage back to China for his grandfather's funeral. Samuel Mitchell, a senator from New York, requested and received from President Jefferson a pass allowing a ship to take the "esteemed citizen" back home. Winchong chartered the *Beaver*, a ship belonging to John Astor, for his return journey. While the Embargo Act would not allow Astor to take more than

²⁷⁷ John D. Haeger. "Business Strategy and Practice in the Early Republic: John Jacob Astor and the American Fur Trade," *Western Historical Quarterly*, Vol. 19 (1988): 189.

\$45,000 in goods, items that were loaded aboard supposedly belonged to Winchong. Astor was allowed to carry a return cargo, which was the usual load of silks, teas, spices, etc., all of which would fetch a higher price due to the Embargo Act.²⁷⁸

This voyage became public knowledge and a potential embarrassment for Jefferson. Walter Barrett wrote: “Every one who knew anything at all about shipping, knew that the ship ‘Beaver’ was built and owned by John Jacob Astor....” Furthermore, “Many believed that John Jacob Astor had picked up a Chinaman in the Park, made up the story, obtained permission from the President, and got his ship out to sea before his plans were suspected.”²⁷⁹ It seems that there may be some truth to this as Astor was not the only one with the idea. Jefferson and Gallatin were bombarded with similar requests from other merchants. It is hard to determine if Astor simply “beat everyone to the punch” or was able to go forward with it due to the help of his masonic network. Regardless, when the bad publicity came out, Astor wrote the following letter: “To the Editor of the Commercial Advertiser: -- I observed in your paper of the 13th instant, an article inviting public attention to a transaction (as you state it, of a most extraordinary character) relative to the ship “Beaver” and the Mandarin. If whoever wrote the article will give me his name, and if he is not prejudiced against any act of the Administration, nor influenced from envy arising from jealousy, he shall receive a statement of facts relative to the transaction in question,.....”²⁸⁰ Astor noted that the Advertiser did not divulge his name,

²⁷⁸ John Denis Haeger, *Business and Finance in the Early Republic*. (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1991), 104. https://digital.library.wayne.edu/item/wayne:WayneStateUniversityPress4324/file/PDF_FULL

²⁷⁹ Elizabeth L. Gebhard, *The Life and Ventures of the Original John Jacob Astor*. (Hudson, New York: Bryan Printing Company, 1915), 153.

²⁸⁰ Ibid., 154.

and, subsequently, Astor made no more inquiries. This incident does demonstrate that, while Astor was engaged in many legitimate business activities, he was also an opportunist who used his connections to further his business. If that required bending the rules or circumventing regulations from time to time, that appears to have been acceptable to not only Astor, but also many merchants attempting to do the same things. It does seem that Astor had the backing of the Jefferson administration, and, when it was needed it, the administration had the backing of Astor and another powerful mason, Stephen Girard.

Stephen Girard was born in Bordeaux, France May 21st, 1750. He was the son of a sailor and followed his father's footsteps by taking to the sea at an early age. Early on, he sailed to the Caribbean and was a licensed captain at age 23 in 1773. By 1776, Stephen Girard had sailed to Port-au-Prince, Hispaniola, the Caribbean, New York, New Orleans, and Cap François. In May of 1776, during the Revolutionary War, he was driven into the port of Philadelphia by a British Frigate. These chance encounters lead to his making Philadelphia his home and the new United States his adopted country.²⁸¹

Girard continued to trade and build his fortune after the Revolution. By 1788-1790, he had a small fleet of trading ships and was becoming a wealthy merchant. He used his connections back in France to his advantages. It must be remembered that during this time American trade to the West Indies and around the world was in a perpetual state of flux. Constant wars restricted trade in one area while making it more lucrative in another area, often just the next island away. Piracy, privateers and foreign warships were persistent threats, and smuggling and other violations of national trade regulations were commonplace.

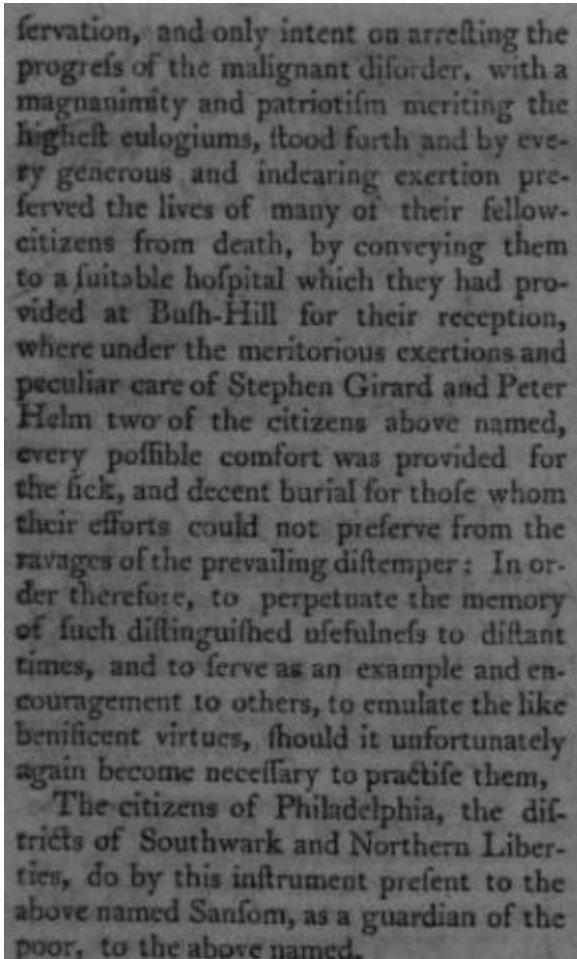
²⁸¹ Albert J. Gares, "Stephen Girard's West Indian Trade 1789-1812," *The Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography*, Vol. 72 (1948): 312.

In an effort to leverage his French heritage and avoid custom duties, Girard sent a letter to Samatan Frères in Marseilles, telling him of a proposed voyage to that city and offering to sell a half interest in his brig, *Kitty*, and to have the ship regularly go between Marseilles and Philadelphia. The reply stated that it was a good idea and plan but the ship must sail under a French flag and two-thirds of the crew needed to be French. This would be done to avoid impost and custom duties on the cargo. In July, the *Kitty* sailed with a power of attorney authorizing Girard & Lacrampe to sell the ship in order for the French firm to pretend to buy it and re-flag the vessel. The mock sale was made, and the brig was renamed *Les Deux Amis*, under French colors, and nominally under the command of Stephen Girard.²⁸² When the ship arrived at Philadelphia in 1788, Stephen made plans to sail to Charleston, South Carolina to take on a cargo of tobacco, rice, and indigo, and to return to France. Given the political climate, it was advised for Girard to take an American passport under the ship *Les Deus Amis*, in case of an encounter with an enemy on the high seas, and for Stephen to use his French passport only in Marseilles. Stephen had taken the oath of allegiance on October 27th, 1778 and was a citizen of Pennsylvania. He would remain a loyal citizen of the United States and make Pennsylvania his home. But he was also an experienced mariner and trader who knew how to avoid custom duties, fees and taxes and made use of many tricks to maximize his profits and minimize the risk to himself, his crew and his ship.²⁸³

²⁸² John Bach McMaster, *The Life and Times of Stephen Girard, Mariner and Merchant*, Vol. 1 (Philadelphia: J.B. Lippincott Company, 1918), 78-80. This two volume set is a compilation of his life and activities. It draws on and has a great deal of primary source material included in the works. Stephen Girard left behind a vast amount of letters, correspondence, ships logs, etc. The manuscript collection has over 50,000 pieces.

²⁸³ Ibid., 80-81.

While in Charleston, Girard was made a Master Mason in Union Blue Lodge No. 8, under the jurisdiction of the Grand Lodge of Ancient York Masons. This was in January 1788. Prior to becoming a mason, it is hard to know how much Stephen Girard embraced the enlightenment.



...ervation, and only intent on arresting the progress of the malignant disorder, with a magnanimity and patriotism meriting the highest eulogiums, stood forth and by every generous and indearing exertion preserved the lives of many of their fellow-citizens from death, by conveying them to a suitable hospital which they had provided at Bush-Hill for their reception, where under the meritorious exertions and peculiar care of Stephen Girard and Peter Helm two of the citizens above named, every possible comfort was provided for the sick, and decent burial for those whom their efforts could not preserve from the ravages of the prevailing distemper: In order therefore, to perpetuate the memory of such distinguished usefulness to distant times, and to serve as an example and encouragement to others, to emulate the like beneficent virtues, should it unfortunately again become necessary to practise them, The citizens of Philadelphia, the districts of Southwark and Northern Liberties, do by this instrument present to the above named Sanfom, as a guardian of the poor, to the above named.

Regardless of whether it was through his masonic experiences or just through his own interests, he certainly adopted many of masonry's principles. It was noted that "In one corner of his bed-chamber stood an old-fashioned small mahogany desk and book-base, in which was contained his library of Voltaire's works, and among the furniture of his common sitting room are two elegant busts of Voltaire and Rousseau."²⁸⁴ Moreover, he named four of his ships: *Voltaire*, *Rousseau*, *Helvetius*, and *Montesquieu*. Some have suggested that he was not an enlightenment thinker, but rather that the ships demonstrated affection for his homeland. However,

Girard had stated that he had no interest in his native land, citing Cicero that a man's fatherland is where he is well off.²⁸⁵

²⁸⁴ Hugh T. Henry, "Stephen Girard," *The Catholic Historical Review*, Vol. 4 (1918): 290. Voltaire appears to have had an effect on Stephen Girard. Voltaire, a fellow Freemason, was initiated into the Lodge of the Nine Sisters, in Paris. Brother Benjamin Franklin was present at this event and may have been Voltaire's conductor. He was an outspoken critic of religious dogma, intolerance and political tyranny. These are things that Girard would also speak and act out against.

²⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 290.

Girard demonstrated masonic ideas of charity and helping ones fellow man during the yellow fever pandemic of 1793, in Philadelphia, and was lauded for his actions. While many people fled the city, Girard stayed behind to care for the sick and bury the dead. Records from the Grand Lodge of Pennsylvania state, “from August 1 to November 9 there were no less than 4,041 deaths from the epidemic in Philadelphia. Of the 6,327 dwelling houses then in Philadelphia 2,728 were abandoned by the owners, and 11,906 of the white inhabitants out of a total of 34,835 fled the city. Among the members of the Citizen’s Committee formed to alleviate the sufferings of the afflicted, no names shine out brighter than those of Brothers Stephen Girard, Lodge No. 3, Israel, Israel, Lodge No.3, and Mathew Clarkson.”²⁸⁶

His motivations for staying to help seem simple enough: in writing to M. Hourquebie he stated that, “I shall accordingly be very busy for a few days and if I have the misfortune to be overcome by the fatigue of my labors I shall have the satisfaction of having performed a duty which we owe to one another.”²⁸⁷ Charity toward one’s fellow man clearly not limited to the masons, but it is one of the fraternity’s foundational values. For Post-Revolutionary brothers, charity and philanthropy took on a universal dimension, and the notion of brotherhood would come to extend beyond the fraternity. A song written for a Newburyport, Massachusetts, celebration noted:

Nor, to Craftsmen alone
Is our sympathy shown –

²⁸⁶ Norris S. Barratt & Julius F. Sachse, *Freemasonry in Pennsylvania, 1727-1907 As Shown by the Records of Lodge No. 2, F. and A.M. of Philadelphia From The Year A.L. 5757, A.D. 1757 Compiled from Original Sources, Volume II 1781-1813*. (Philadelphia: The New Era Printing Company, 1900), 182-183.

²⁸⁷ John Bach McMaster, *The Life and Times of Stephen Girard, Mariner and Merchant*, Vol. 1 (Philadelphia: J.B. Lippincott Company, 1918), 214.

The world are our brothers – their weal is our own.²⁸⁸

Girard was recognized for his contributions during the pandemic. An excerpt from an article from the *Gazette of the United States & Evening Advertiser*, Philadelphia, PA March 27, 1794²⁸⁹ discusses the care and comfort he had provided. Up to this point, he had been a merchant of some standing but was otherwise relatively unknown. His actions during the pandemic put him into public light. Afterwards, he would be more involved with politics. He was an active mason and had clearly demonstrated his adherence to those principles. Once the disease subsided, he resumed his trading endeavors and accumulated vast wealth as the War of 1812 approached.

A brief synopsis of Stephen Girard's trade serves to illustrate his financial growth as well as the expansive network in which he operated. His West Indies trade reached its pinnacle around the year 1800. His total out cargo valuation of exports was \$1,367,249, and his imported cargo valuation was \$1,253,213 from the years 1789 to 1812. 58 percent of his cargoes went to Cap François, Havana received 21 percent, Port-au-Prince, 11 percent, and Guadeloupe, St. Thomas, Martinique and other West Indian island, around ten per cent.²⁹⁰

Girard's West Indies trade from 1789 to 1793 reflects his pursuit of opportunities where he could find them. During that time, his shipments to the Indies were double in value over those he sent to Europe. However, when the British navy pushed French and France-allied

²⁸⁸ Steven C. Bullock. *Revolutionary Brotherhood, Freemasonry and the Transformation of the American Social Order, 1730-1840*. (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996), 192.

²⁸⁹ <https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn83025878/1794-03-27/ed-1/seq-3/>

²⁹⁰ Albert J. Gares, "Stephen Girard's West Indian Trade 1789-1812," *The Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography*, Vol. 72 (1948): 341.

merchant ships off the sea, his cargoes to Europe from 1794 to 1807 tripled his West Indian trade operations. During the War of 1812, he discontinued his trade with the Indies forever. At that point his trade with Europe, Asia, Africa and South America became enormously profitable. The trade route he preferred was for a ship to leave Philadelphia and head to Charleston, South Carolina to take on a mixed cargo of rice and cotton. Profits on these items could be as high as 50 percent in Amsterdam. From there, the ship would head to Lisbon for Spanish milled dollars, thence to Canton, Java, Batavia, Isle of France or Bourbon, back to Amsterdam and once more to the East and then to home. Loaded with cotton, rice, and tobacco, the ship would make for Bremen and onto St. Petersburg for iron, ravens, duck and hemp and then return to Philadelphia.²⁹¹ These trade routes and the fleet of ships under Girard's command made him one of the wealthiest men in America by the start of the War of 1812. Numerous contacts in distant lands kept him informed of political and economic developments.

With Europe engaged in war, Girard brought his capital back to the United States. His plan was to open a bank. After the First Bank of the United States charter expired in 1811, Girard purchased most of its stock and facilities in Philadelphia. He created the Bank of Girard under his personal ownership. Other banks in Philadelphia tried to stop him, saying that the law prohibited an association of individuals from banking without a charter. Girard argued, successfully, that that law made no prohibition on a single person doing so and that he backed the bank on his personal credit and thus did not need to incorporate. In creating his bank from the expired United States Bank, he essentially made a bet on United States securities and the

²⁹¹ John Bach McMaster, *The Life and Times of Stephen Girard, Mariner and Merchant*, Vol. II (Philadelphia: J.B. Lippincott Company, 1918), 344.

funded debt of the country. It was a somewhat of a risky venture, but Girard had always expressed great confidence in the nation. Moreover, his reasoning was that if the bank was re-chartered, he would be one of its largest shareholders, and, if it failed, he could still dispose of his investment at a profit.²⁹²

During the War of 1812, Secretary of the Treasury Gallatin's efforts to raise \$10 million for the war effort was failing miserably. Girard maintained an optimistic view of the United States and its resources, commenting to his agent in France about the enterprising nature of Americans and the nation's growing manufacturing capabilities. During the early months of 1813, military prospects for the US were bleak. Congress had failed to raise \$10 million in 1812, and in February of 1813, a new loan of \$16 million was issued. By March 31st, 1813, \$10,161,800 remained. The inability of the United States to raise these vital funds placed the country in danger. There were threats on the land and sea, and the nation had no money to train an army or navy for its defense.²⁹³

John Jacob Astor, David Parish, and Stephen Girard, all of whom were personal friends, took over the remaining \$10 million loan. Three immigrants, two of whom were masons, risked their fortunes to help their adopted country and may have saved the nation from defeat. The loans were handled through Girard's Bank, which became a major financier of the U.S. government for the duration of the war. Before their intervention, the gloom of defeat was evident in an editorial of the *National Daily Intelligencer*, on March 31st, 1813: "Enlistments are discouraged; The Federalist who accepts a position is denounced. Do we attempt to pay troops

²⁹² Kenneth L. Brown. "Stephen Girard's Bank," *The Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography*, Vol. 66 (1942): 32-33.

²⁹³ *Ibid.*, 40-41.

or augment the Navy, the poisoned dark of calumny is leveled at our government and the capitalist hides his moneybags....”²⁹⁴

[From the National Intelligencer.]
BANK OF THE UNITED STATES.
 The President and Senate have appointed the following named, Directors of the Bank of the United States, to serve until the end and expiration of the first Monday of the month of January next.
 William Jones, Stephen Girard, Pierce Butler of the city of Philadelphia.
 James A. Buchanan, of the city of Baltimore.
 John Jacob Astor, of the city of New-York.

After Girard, Astor and Parish came to the aid of the government, the tone changed markedly. The National Daily Advocate on April 15th reports: “We congratulate the country upon filling up of the loan

on terms highly favorable to the country, notwithstanding that maniac Timothy Pickering, who publically proposed that the United States violate the public faith toward subscribers to the loan.”²⁹⁵ The Ontario repository on June 4th, 1816 ran an article originally from the National Intelligencer showing both Astor and Girard as Directors of the Bank of the United States.²⁹⁶ It is hard to ascertain what their respective motivations were for loaning the money on such favorable terms. Patriotism probably played a part, but there was still huge risk involved. Buying government securities was a new concept, and the United States did not have a long credit history. Girard and Astor knew each other personally from business dealings, but perhaps through their Masonic connections as well.

Girard, given his French heritage, his interest in the Enlightenment and its thinkers, and his many contacts in France, certainly kept abreast of the French Revolution and perhaps even

²⁹⁴ Ibid., 42.

²⁹⁵ Ibid., 43.

²⁹⁶ <http://nyshistoricnewspapers.org/lccn/sn83031529/1816-06-04/ed-1/seq-2/>

the many known Freemasons who were involved in the revolution. In the decades leading up to the revolution, Voltaire and others had attacked tyranny, as well as political and religious oppression. The ideals which Voltaire and masonry both espoused probably had a part in how Girard viewed the world. People struggling against planters and aristocrats for the Rights of Man probably had a strong appeal to Girard.

In 1810, just a couple years before masons accompanied the “Immortal 45” to Venezuela, Don Juan Vincent Bolivar arrived in Philadelphia aboard the schooner *Pointer*. He had a cargo of indigo, coffee, and hides to be sold through M. Curcier with the proceeds to be used to purchase guns and powder. M. Curcier failed to sell the goods and had some disputes with Bolivar who ordered him to turn the goods over to Stephen Girard. Girard in writing to M. Curcier states that he is inclined to help Mr. Bolivar and to settle the account of M. Curcier. Girard goes on to say that M. Curcier can put down all his claims “even for the muskets which you said to be bought in New York for 11 gourdes each....and finally to present this account to Mr. Bolivar and after obtaining his approval to consider me responsible for the payment of everything.”²⁹⁷

There are a few interesting things to note here. One is the ease with which Bolivar gained access to Girard. While Girard had extensive trade dealings in the West Indies, it is not known if Bolivar and Girard had any previous dealings. It may be that Girard, being an enlightenment-minded person, was inclined to help a revolutionary. Perhaps it was a mason coming to the aid of another mason, which one is bound to do based on obligations. Girard

²⁹⁷ John Bach McMaster, *The Life and Times of Stephen Girard, Mariner and Merchant*, Vol. II (Philadelphia: J.B. Lippincott Company, 1918), 164.

spent his entire life involved in trade and was known not to deal in credit or the advancement of money in business. In this case, he did both. Girard worked with Bolivar and Curcier to settle accounts as well as have muskets shipped to his port and address for the account of Mr. Bolivar, where upon their arrival, Girard writes, "I received your account for the muskets bought for order of Mr. Curcier and notice of your draft on me at sight, order of Messrs Badaraque & Darrieux for \$4,830,82 in payment for this article. I will honor it."²⁹⁸

Girard facilitated the transaction and the shipping of some muskets to Bolivar, including extending him credit, which he knew might not be repaid. Girard extended \$17,801.22 in credit and warned that Bolivar's goods would not be able to cover the debt. In the last chapter, the Masonic Oath was briefly discussed; part of it was to aid another mason without causing detriment to oneself or one's family. At some point, Girard basically said that he could no longer support Bolivar's business ventures, but a number of muskets, powder, flints, etc. were nevertheless shipped. Stephen Girard clearly acted out of character in working with Bolivar, and his Masonic ideas certainly could have been a key factor in his actions.

Stephen Girard at the time of his death in 1830 was the wealthiest man in America, only to be bested by his fellow mason John Astor, who died in 1848. Both men had embraced Masonic and Enlightenment ideas during their lives. Charity and education, as seen in chapter one are tenants of masonry. Both of these men amassed fortunes and interestingly, their charitable ideas were remarkably similar. Girard in his will left money for what would become Girard College, which is a private boarding school for K-12 students coming from single parent or guardian households. The school fully funds its students and is still in operation

²⁹⁸ Ibid., 166.

today. Girard also left money to various municipal institutions in Philadelphia and New Orleans. Astor left funds to build and begin the Astor Library of New York, which would eventually become the New York Public Library. He also left funds for a poorhouse and orphanage. Education and caring for future generations are masonic tenants, and while charity is not unique to masonry, both Astor and Girard's giving's were in keeping with masonic values.

Masons from the Great Lakes and East Coast maintained lines of communication throughout many parts of the world. Masons, acting from a combination of Enlightenment ideals and economic interests, prompted Caribbean islands to petition the new republic of the United States for Masonic charters with the promise to help any brothers who arrived in the islands through trade and other forms of assistance. Masons sought each other out during times of political strife and led rebellions against aristocratic regimes. The motivation to become a mason was likely as diverse as the Fraternity itself. The key was that masons, regardless of who they were or where they hailed from, could recognize one another by a ship flying a Masonic flag, see a Lodge in an unfamiliar town, or various modes of recognition. They then had an extended network upon which they could rely. A fur trader at Mackinaw may not ever leave northern Michigan, yet his furs reached a brother in Detroit, who shipped them to a brother in Albany and onto one of brother Astor's ships in New York, which in turn reached brother Ellice in London. It would be hard to find another organization with this network and reach that was not highly exclusive, bound by strict religious or business ties. As the saying goes, a chain is only as strong as its weakest link. The strength of the Masonic fraternity is its notion of equality amongst the brethren thus ensured a strong chain of networks.

Conclusion

“We are all Atlanticists now” are the words used by David Armitage to explain the incredible interest in the study of the Atlantic World by historians of North and South America, the Caribbean, Africa, and western Europe.²⁹⁹ By looking beyond national barriers and political constructs, historians have been able to ask new questions and examine topics such as migration, economics, and cultural exchange through a different set of historical lenses. The ocean provides the geographical framework from which to work, and the beginning of Atlantic history is generally marked by Christopher Columbus who made the first crossing in 1492. Some argue that Scandinavians were the first, however, the longship simply did not have the logistical capabilities of fifteenth-century ships, which were the key to large scale and sustained European migration and trading networks.

In North America, studies of the Atlantic World often stop on the Eastern Seaboard. This dissertation challenges that idea. Fur was among the most lucrative commodities of the eighteenth-century. France and England both recognized its value and fought numerous conflicts in the Great Lakes region in an effort to secure the land, vital waterways and control over the rich fur trading lands. Native American tribes, particularly the Iroquois and Huron, played a key role in the fur trade and in the balance of power in the region. The Great Lakes were so important that the greatest global conflict of the eighteenth-century, the Seven Years’ War, was started on the frontier in the Ohio Valley, not in Europe, India, or the Caribbean.

²⁹⁹ David Armitage & Michael Braddick, Ed. *The British Atlantic World, 1500-1800*. (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002), 13.

Given the importance of the Great Lakes to these empires, scholars need to examine the lakes from an Atlantic and global perspective. The region from its initial settlement was a crucial part of the French and British empires and the commodities from the lakes linked the region to the world. This study has illustrated these relationships and the key role the Freemasons played in connecting the Great Lakes to the Atlantic world. Masonic networks provided the chain connecting traders, government officials and political leaders from the frontiers to the metropole. This dissertation places the Great Lakes region in the Atlantic World and serves to extend that world well beyond the Eastern Seaboard.

If the Atlantic World is defined by the water and ocean, then the Saint Lawrence River provides that direct link from the lakes to the broader Atlantic. Ships would come down the river to Quebec and Montreal on annual fur trading ventures. Trading posts in the interior of the region facilitated interaction with Native Americans, traders, military officers and government officials, many of whom belonged to a new organization, the freemasons.

Modern freemasonry begins with the formation of the Grand Lodge of England in 1717. Prior to this, there were numerous independent lodges and guilds, but they all came under the control of the Grand Lodges of England, Ireland and Scotland. Masonry spread rapidly throughout Europe and the colonies. Its ideas of blending religion, science, universal brotherhood and charity had broad appeal to men of different religions and socio-economic status. Freemasonry proved to be popular with the military as grand lodges began to issue warrants to military units fighting in North America during the Seven Years' War.

Military units were key to the spread of masonry in North America. Each unit was given a warrant to hold lodge meetings and initiate more brothers into the fraternity. Civilians were

sometimes allowed to join, but when a unit re-deployed to another location, the civilians of a given area would often petition a grand lodge for permission to start their own lodges. As the British expanded their territorial gains during the war, masonic lodges spread. Lodges were established in Albany, Detroit, Montreal, Quebec, and Mackinaw to name a few locations. Of note is how active these masons were on the frontier. Masonry is generally associated with Enlightenment and cosmopolitan ideas and environments. Clearly masonry played an important role in imperial expansion through formation of new lodges at forts, trading posts, and new settlements.

The lodges that remained after the Seven Years' War formed the nodes of a network of masonic brothers who were engaged in many political, trade, and military activities. These masons came to rely on each other to further their interests. Many of the key figures in the region were masons. Sir William Johnson and his son Sir John Johnson established a lodge and had a large network of masons they worked with, including Iroquois Chief Joseph Brant, who also was a mason. This network was engaged in political, military and trade activities and would last until the end of the Revolutionary War.

As the new United States took shape, masons continued their activities in the region. The Grand Lodges of Pennsylvania and New York issued new charters to many lodges including in the Caribbean, where petitioners requested a charter from the Grand Lodge of Pennsylvania because the United States embodied the highest masonic principles. Moreover, they would keep lookouts for ships flying masonic flags entering port in order to render assistance to the captain.

With ideas of nationalism and citizenship still taking shape in the Great Lakes region, masonry provided a supranational organization that opened up a network of connections that transcended political, national, religious, and ethnic boundaries. The Great Lakes region was a true mix of British, French, American, Huron, Iroquois, and many other groups with their own language, cultures and ways of doing things. The shared initiation experience of masonry provided a level of trust that a fellow mason was there to render assistance; this was demonstrated in sea-ports, trading outposts and on the battlefield.

With lodges throughout the region established, furs and other trade items flowed from the lakes to eastern port cities. Here masons, such as John Jacob Astor and Stephen Girard used their masonic connections to send ships to Europe, the West Indies, China and many other locations. This network was so successful that by the War of 1812, these two masonic immigrants were financing the American war effort and were the richest men in the United States. They were able to accomplish this through an extensive network of masonic brothers who traded with Native Americans on the frontier, and imported goods from Britain, Caribbean islands, China and other locations using masonic agents in these locations. Fellow masons built the ships used in trade, and when necessary, leveraged their political connections, often with masons in office to circumvent laws, embargoes and trade duties.

This study has demonstrated that the Great Lakes from their earliest settlement were a part of the Atlantic World. Empires fought wars over their land and trade goods. Native peoples engaged with French and English settlers, and freemasonry provided a shared experience, reinforcing the idea that masons could rely on other masons. This was proven many times, allowing for numerous masons to rise to the highest levels of their given vocations.

The long reach of masonry into the hinterlands of North American colonial settlement, hundreds of miles from the eastern seaboard, shows that the fraternity was far from a purely cosmopolitan organization. The network of Freemasons on the frontier was a vital link connecting the Great Lakes to the broader Atlantic World.

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ABSTRACT**FRONTIER FREEMASONS: MASONIC NETWORKS
LINKING THE GREAT LAKES TO THE ATLANTIC WORLD, 1750-1820**

by

KEVIN H. NICHOLS**December 2020****Advisor:** Dr. Eric Ash**Major:** History**Degree:** Doctor of Philosophy

The Atlantic World as a source of historical inquiry has generated a great deal of scholarly research. Historians have changed how they look at empires, immigration, and networks of exchange. By making the ocean, and not a land mass or political entity the source of study, scholars have asked different questions and looked the past in new ways. In almost all cases, the Atlantic World ends on the Eastern Seaboard.

This dissertation extends the Atlantic World to the westernmost frontier of the Great Lakes region. Freemasons spread throughout the region during the Seven Years' War. Military units with lodges attached stayed in an area and then deployed elsewhere. Civilians who had come to appreciate masonry would then start their own lodges. These lodges created links in a chain that reached from the frontier to the East Coast and throughout the Atlantic World. For example, the Grand Lodge of Pennsylvania issued charters for masons to form new lodges in the Caribbean. Masons through their shared initiation rituals and mutual oblations to assist each other established a network of brothers on which a fellow mason could rely. Moreover,

masonry was a supranational organization that transcended traditional barriers such as race, class or creed.

Many key officials, military officers, merchants, traders, and Native Americans were masons, and their letters, records and activities provide the documents linking the Great Lakes to the Atlantic World. By examining this material one can see masonic fur traders in Mackinaw shipping and receiving goods from such ports as, Montreal, Quebec, Detroit, Albany, and New York. From these cities, masons had contacts in London, France, and numerous islands in the Caribbean. When one considers the importance of the fur trade to British and French empires in the eighteenth century and the wars fought to control the land, the Great Lakes as demonstrated by this study must be considered when examining the colonial Atlantic World.

AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL STATEMENT

During the early stage of my education, I always enjoyed history classes and took as many as possible. After graduation from high school in 1989, I enlisted in the Army. My unit spent a great deal of time in other countries, mainly in Asia. Visiting different places and experiencing diverse cultures provided a valuable insight to the world beyond our borders.

After my discharge, I began my college career at Michigan State University. Remembering my love of the humanities, I majored in Anthropology with a focus on archaeology. Upon graduation, I was accepted into East Carolina University's Maritime Studies Program, which combines maritime history and nautical archaeology. I had developed a fascination with maritime history as well as a sailing and this was a perfect way to combine my interests.

Shortly after 9-11, I began working as a Foreign Intelligence Officer for the Department of the Army, in Warren Michigan. I had been looking for a Ph.D. program and the faculty interests and strengths at Wayne State University proved to be a perfect fit. I was accepted into the program and shortly after spent most of the next five years working in Iraq and Afghanistan, a difficult place from which to research maritime history. Fortunately, upon my return, I was able to continue my research into early modern and colonial American maritime history, completing my doctoral dissertation. Another passion of mine is teaching, and I have served as a history instructor at several community colleges in the US as well as teaching history classes on military bases for deployed troops, when overseas.

My other interests include sailing, blacksmithing, and fencing (swords, not chain link.) which I try to do as often as time permits.